

THE
²
WORKS

OF

JAMES (HERVEY,) A. M.

LATE RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVELL,

In Northamptonshire.

Vol. 3.

CONTAINING

THIRON AND ASPASIO.



*My mouth shall daily speak of thy righteousness and salvation ; for I know
no end thereof. Psalm. lxxxi. 13.*

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TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

LADY FRANCES SHIRLEY.

MADAM,

IF christianity was inconsistent with true *politeness*, or prejudicial to real *happiness*, I should be extremely injudicious, and inexcusably ungrateful, in presenting these essays to your **LADYSHIP**. But as the religion of JESUS is the grand ornament of our nature, and a source of the sublimest joy, the purport of the following pages cannot be unworthy the countenance and protection of the most accomplished person. Neither can there be a wish, more suitable to the obligations or the dictates of a *grateful heart*, than you may experience what you read, and be what you patronize.

DID religion consist in a *formal* round of external observances, or a *forced* submission to some rigorous austerities, I should not scruple to join with the infidel and the sensualist, to dread it in one view, and to despise it in another. You need not be informed, MADAM, that it is as much superior to all such *low* and *forbidding* singularities, as the heavens are higher than the earth. It is described by an author, who learnt its theory in the regions of paradise, and who displayed its efficacy in his own most exemplary conversation—It is thus described by that incomparable author; *The Kingdom of GOD, is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.*

To be reconciled to the omnipotent GOD—To be interested in the unsearchable riches of CHRIST—To be re-

newed in our hearts, and influenced in our lives, by the sanctifying operations of the divine SPIRIT—This is *evangelical* righteousness.—This is *genuine* religion. This M-DAM, is the kingdom of GOD established in the soul. —How benign and inviting is such an institution ! How honorable and advantageous such a state ! And from such privileges, what other effects can flow, but that *peace which passeth all understanding ? That joy, which is unspeakable and glorious ?*

Is there any thing in the amusements of the gay, and pursuits of the ambitious, of greater, of equal, of comparable value ? Is not all that wealth can purchase, all that grandeur can bestow, somewhat like those glittering bubbles, which when viewed are *emptiness*, when grasped are *nothing* ? Whereas, the comforts, the benefits, the hopes of christianity, are at once supremely excellent, and infinitely durable. A portion, suited to the dignity of a rational soul ; large as its faculties, and immortal as its being.

ALL these blessings are centered in CHRIST ; were purchased by CHRIST ; are communicated from CHRIST. —It is not want of knowing those boundless and everlasting treasures of *pardon*ing, *justify*ing, *save*ing merit, which the LORD JESUS CHRIST possesses, and which he freely dispenses even to sinners, that so many *unthinking* persons are attached to ignoble objects, and beguiled by delusory pleasures. *Unhappy* creatures ! What can they do, but catch at shadows, and stoop to trifles, while they are ignorant of the grand the substantial, the exalted good ?—It is for want of duly attending to that fullness of grace, and that plenteousness of redemption, which dwell in our most adorable SAVIOUR, that so many serious persons are *strangers* to the tranquillity and sweetness of religion : are subject to all its restraints, but enjoy few, if any of its delights. *Mistaken* zealots ! How can they avoid the gloomy situation and the uncomfortable circumstance, so long as they withdraw themselves from the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS and his all-cheering beams ?

MAY your LADYSHIP live continually under his heavenly light and healing wings ! Be more fully assured of his dying

DEDICATION.

love, and have brighter, still brighter manifestations of his immense perfections ! By these delightful views, and by that precious faith, may your heart be transformed into his holy, his amiable, his divine image ! Your happiness will then be just such as is wished, but far greater than can be expressed by,

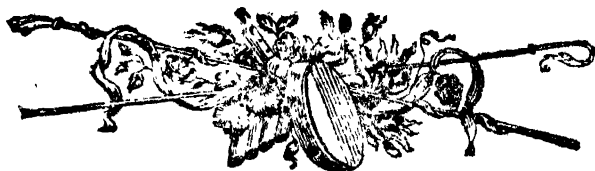
MADAM,

Your most obliged, and

Most obedient humble Servant,

JAMES HERVEY.





PREFACE.

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THE reader will probably expect some account of the ensuing work ; and, to gratify him in this particular, will be a real pleasure to the author.

The beauty and excellency of the scriptures—the ruin and depravity of human nature—its happy recovery, founded on the atonement, and effected by the **SPIRIT** of **CHRIST**—these are some of the chief points, vindicated, illustrated, and applied in the following sheets.—But the grand article, that which makes the principle figure, is the **IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS** of our divine **LORD** ; from whence arises our justification before **GOD**, and our renewed title to every heavenly blessing. An article, which, though eminent for its importance, seems to be little understood, and less regarded ; if not much mistaken, and almost forgotten.

The importance of this great evangelical doctrine—how worthy it is of the most attentive consideration, and of universal acceptance—is hinted in the second dialogue. So that I need, in this place, do nothing more, than give the sense of a passage from **Witsius**, which is there introduced in the notes.—“ The doctrine of justification, says that excellent author, spreads itself through the whole system of divinity. As this is either solidly established, or superficially touched ; fully stated, or slightly dismissed ; accordingly, the whole structure of religion, either rises graceful and magnificent, superior to assault, and beyond the power of decay ; or else it appears disproportioned and defective, totters on its foundation, and threatens an opprobrious fall.”

The design is executed in the form of dialogue. Those parts only excepted, in which it was not easy to carry on a conversation, and assign to each person a proper degree of significance. Here, to avoid the common imputation, of bringing upon the stage a mute or a shadow—one who fights without weapons, and submits without a contest—the scene shifts. Ours gentlemen separate ; and, instead of conversing, enter upon an epistolary correspondence.

The dialogue form seems, on many considerations, a very eligible way of writing.—Hereby, the author gives an air both of dignity and of modesty to his sentiments. Of dignity; by delivering them from the mouths of persons, in every respect superior to himself. Of modesty; because we no longer consider him in the raised, but insidious capacity of a teacher. Instead of calling us to his feet and dictating his precepts, he gratifies our curiosity. He turns back a curtain, and admits us to some remarkable interviews, or interesting conferences. We overhear, by a kind of innocent or imaginary stealth, the debates which pass in the recesses of privacy; which are carried on, with the most unreserved freedom of speech, and openness of heart.—A circumstance, which will apologize for some peculiarities, that might otherwise be inconsistent with humility, or offensive to delicacy. Particularly, it may obviate the disgust, which generally, and indeed deservedly, attends the frequent intrusion of that ambitious and usurping little monosyllable, I.

The names of the persons are prefixed, each to his respective share of the discourse; in imitation of Cicero, and for the reasons which he assigns. *Quam enim ipso induxi loquentes: ne Inquam and Inquit famus interponerentur. Atque ideo fieri, ut tanquam præsentibus eorum haberi Sermo videretur.* This method, he very justly intimates, is removed farthest from the narrative, and makes the nearest approaches to life and reality. It quite secretes the author; and, by introducing the persons themselves, renders all that passes entirely their own.—It prevents likewise the repetition of those interlocutory words, he said, he replied. Which, unless the speeches are very long, must frequently recur, and have no pleasing effect upon the ear. And if the speeches are long, the spirit of conversation is lost. The associates are no longer talking, but one of them, or the author, is lecturing.

Though I have so much to say in behalf of the model, I have very little to say with regard to the execution—unless it be to confess the deficiency. There is not, I am sensible, that peculiar air and distinguishing turn, which should mark and characterize each speaker. This is what the nature of finished dialogue requires, and what the author applauds in some very superior writers. But, not having the ability to copy it, he has not the vanity to affect it.—Nevertheless, the attentive reader will, all along, perceive a difference in the sentiment, if not in language. The materials vary, even when they run into the same mould, and take the same form.—In the diction also there must be some diversity. Because, several of the objections are proposed in the very words of one or two eminent writers, who have appeared on the other side of the question. These are not particularized by the mark of quotation; because, the man of reading will have no occasion for the assistance of such an index, and the man of taste will probably discern them by the singularity of the style.

Some of the following pieces, it must be acknowledged, are of the controversial kind. A species of writing, least susceptible of the gra-

ces, which embellish composition; or rather most destitute of the attractives, which engage attention, and create delight.—Yet I have sometimes thought, that it is not absolutely impossible, to make even the stern face of controversy wear a smile; and to reap some valuable fruit, from the rugged furrows of disputation. Whether this is effected in the present work, the public must judge; that it has been attempted, the author may be permitted to declare.

To soften the asperities of argument, views of nature are interpersed. That, if the former should carry the appearance of a rude entangled forest, or of a flowing gloomy recess, there may be some agreeable openings, and lightsome avenues, to admit a prospect of the country: which is always arrayed in charms, and never fails to please.

The author confesses a very peculiar fondness for the amiable scenes of creation. It is therefore not at all improbable, but his excursions on this topic may be of the diffusive kind, and his descriptions somewhat luxuriant. It is hoped, however, that the benevolent reader will forgive him in this favourite foible.—If any should feel the same prevailing passion for the beauties of nature, 'tis possible these portions may be inclined, not only to excite, but to approve the fault; and may take part with the lover, even in opposition to the critic.

Further to diversify the piece, sketches of philosophy are introduced. They are to be understood, and calculated to entertain the imagination, as well as to improve the heart. More particularly, to display the wise and beneficent design of providence, in the various appearances and numberless productions of the material world. Neither are these remarks altogether foreign to the main point. But, as far as the world of creation may comport with the riches of grace, subserve the general end.

As to the choice of my subjects—some people have desired to see an inventory, against the fashionable and predominant vices of the age.—This, I apprehend, would be like picking off the leaves, or clipping away the twigs, from some over-grown and noxious tree. Leaving this tedious and ineffectual toil, I would rather lay the axe at the root. Let the knowledge and love of CHRIST take place in the heart, and not only a few of the branches, but the whole body of sin will fall at once.

Some would have the author insist upon the conscientious observance of the sabbath, mutilate the daily worship of GOD in the family, and urge a devout attendance on the public ordinances of religion.—But when a person is convinced of sin, and made sensible of misery; when he has tasted the good word of GOD*, and seen by faith the LORD'S CHRIST†, he will want no solicitation or incitement, to

* Heb. vi. 5.

† Luke x. 26.

these means of grace, and exercises of godliness. He will have just the same disposition to them all, as the hungry appetite has to wholesome food, or the new-born babe * to the milk of the breast.

Others may imagine, that I have neglected the interests of morality; because, here is no professed attempt to delineate its duties, or enforce its practice.—Let these persons remember, that morality never makes such vigorous shoots, never produces such generous fruit, as when engrafted on evangelical principles.—And if I do not crop the pink, the rose, and the carnation; if I do not gather the peach, the nectarine, and the pine-apple; and put them into my reader's hand, for his immediate enjoyment: I am endeavouring to sow the seeds, and plant the roots, in his garden; which, if cherished by the favorable influence of heaven, will yield him, not an occasional, but a constant supply of all.

As several texts of scripture come under consideration, criticisms upon the original are frequently subjoined. In order to clear up some difficulties, to rectify some mistranslations, or point out the many delicate and masterly strokes, which occur in the BIBLE.—And glad should I be, extremely glad, if I might recommend and endear that invaluable book. If, as the divine REDEEMER rideth on in the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness, this hand might scatter a palm branch, or this performance might lie as a floweret, to shew his way, and solemnize his triumph.

In the course of the disputation, I dare not suppose, that I have discussed all the arguments, which sagacity may devise, or sophistry urge. perhaps, I have not removed all the scruples, which may awaken prejudice, or embarrass integrity. This, however, I may venture to affirm, that I myself have met with no considerable objection, which is not either expressly answered, or virtually refuted, in these conferences. And, though I should neither satisfy nor silence the gain-sayer, I shall think my endeavours happily employed, if they may throw light upon the dim apprehension; establish the wavering faith; or comfort the afflicted conscience.

If any should burlesque or ridicule these venerable truths, and exalted privileges, I shall only say with my divine MASTER; O! that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid, it is evident from such a procedure, they are hid from thine eyes.—Should any, in the spirit of decency and candor,

* 1 Pet. ii. 2. This comparison is, perhaps, the most exact and expressive, that words can form, or fancy conceive. Babes covet nothing but the milk of the breast. They are indifferent about all other things. Give them riches, give them honors, give them whatever you please, without this rich, delicious, balmy nutriment, they will not, they cannot be satisfied.—How surely does this illustrate, and how forcibly inculcate, what our LORD stiles, the single eye, and the one thing needful! or, the salutary doctrines, and delightful privileges of the gospel; together with that supreme value for them, and undivided complacency in them, which are the distinguishing character of the christian!

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either start new, or revive old objections, I doubt not, but they will receive both a due examination and a proper reply. As these doctrines enter into the very essence of the gospel, and constitute the glory of our religion, they can never want a succession of advocates, so long as the sun and moon endure.—For my own part, I must beg leave to retire from the lists, and lay down the weapons of controversy. Virgil's language is my resolution;

Dilcedam, explebo Numerum; reddarque Tenebris.

The declaration is made, not from any the least suspicion, that my tenets are indefensible; but because I would apprise my friends, and the friends of our common christianity, that the field is cleared up, and for them to advance; that I resign to others the glorious combat; and still content myself with wishing them success in the name of the LORD.—Because, it becomes a person in my declining state, to be more peculiarly intent upon encountering a different adversary; who is sure to overcome, and never allows quarter. Yet, by this word of my testimony, and by the blood of the LAMB*, I hope to triumph even when I fall; and to be more than conqueror, through JEHOVAH my righteousness.

Should any thing be urged, forcible enough to overthrow my arguments, or detect a mistake in my sentiments, the world may depend upon seeing a free and unshaken retraction. I shall look upon it as a duty, which I owe to my conscience, to my readers, and to my GOD, publicly to acknowledge the error.—It is one thing to be silent; another to be obstinate. As I shall indissolubly adhere to the first, I would, with equal steadiness, renounce the last. Though I withdraw from the strife of pens and of tongues, I shall take care to preserve a mind, ever accessible to truth, ever open to conviction. A mind, infinitely more concerned for the purity and prosperity of the everlasting gospel, than for the prevalence of my own opinion, or the credit of my own performance.

As I have the happiness of being a member, and the honor of being a minister of the reformed established church; I cannot but regret, with a peculiar pleasure, that every doctrine of note, maintained in these dialogues and letters, is either implied in, our Liturgy, scattered in our articles, or taught in our Homilies.—It affords me likewise some degree of satisfaction to observe, that the most material of the sentiments have been adopted by Milton; are incorporated into his Paradise Lost; and add dignity to the sublimest poem in the world. To have the highest human authority, and the first genius of the nation on a writer's side,

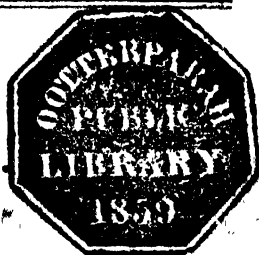
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is no contemptible support. This must surely give a sanction, wherever our religious establishment is revered, or polite literature is held in repute. Yet even this sanction, compared with the oracle of revelation, is only like a range of cyphers, connected with the initial figure. Which, were they detached, would be insignificant; but, in such a subordination, are considerable.

Perhaps, it should be farther acknowledged, that I have not always confined myself to the method of our systematic writers, nor followed their train of thoughts with a scrupulous regularity. I would conduct my fellow-creature to the supreme and eternal good, CHRIST JESUS. I have chosen the path, which seemed most agreeable and inviting, rather than most beaten and frequented. If this leads, with equal certainty, to the great and desirable end, I dare promise myself an easy excuse. However, that method and order, in the doctrinal parts of the plan, are not wholly neglected, the following summary of contents may shew.



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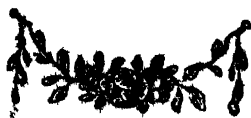
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THE sun was fiercely bright, and the sky without a cloud,—Not a breathe fanned the woods; not a gale curled the stream.—The fields, exposed to all the fiery beams, were like a glowing hearth.—The little birds, overcome by the potent influence, lost for a while their tuneful notes. Nothing was heard in the garden, but the drowsy hum of bees, and the moan-like buz of winged insects.—All nature seemed to languish. The flourishing meads looked sickly; the gayest blossoms began to fade; the sprightliest animals, if not reposed under some cooling shelter, panted for breath, and hung their drooping heads amidst the all-surrounding blaze and the most unsufferable heat.

Aspasio disappeared since dinner. None could tell whither he was gone.—Theron, as soon as the tea equipage was removed, took his way to the wood. Longing for the thickest shade, he hastened to the centre. The avenue consisted of a serpentine walk. Which, after having presented you with several species of plants, and several degrees of verdure, ends in a large circular area: not covered with a Grecian or Roman temple, unmeaning imitation of Pagan idolatry; but surrounded with aged and princely oaks. The coalition of whose branches, threw over the grassy plat a majestic rural dome; and their unpierced foliage *imbrowned the noon-tide hours.*

In the midst, and elevated on a square base, was a statue representing the venerable Elijah.—in a posture of worship—with his hands stretched out, and eyes lifted up to heaven. His attitude, his air, his every feature, were a most lively comment on those strong energetic expressions of Scripture; *take hold on GOD**; *wrestle with the ALMIGHTY†*; *pour out your hearts before him‡*.—On one side of the pedestal, were engraven the Priests of Baal; in frantic emotions calling upon their senseless Deity; and gashing themselves with unavailing wounds.—On the other, was exhibited, in basso-relievo, the adoring Tishbite's altar; his victim burning with fire from the LORD, even while the water ran from every limb, and overflowed the trench below.

A remote cascade tumbled from a craggy rock. The very stream, like its master, seemed in haste to escape from the intense and raging heat. With hurry and impetuosity, it rushed into this grand harbour. But here, impressed, as it were, with the unexpected solemnity of the scene, it suddenly checked the tumultuous way. And, having just saluted, or kissed the skirts of this revered spot, turned aside into a most sequestered path. As some heedless trifter, who bolts unawares into the royal presence, stands struck with reverence and awe, or retires with precipitance and confusion.

The deep gloom, shedding a kind of night, even when the sun glared in the sky—Not a whisper stirring, among so many millions of leaves; and all their warbling natives hushed in silence. The sonorous toll of the distant cascade, and the tinkling chime of the nearer rill—The profound adoration, and fervent devotion, which lived in the lineaments of the impassioned stone—All these circumstances rendered the place peculiarly pensive and august. Not much unlike the ancient oratories; where holy people withdrew from the giddy ring, and the bustling croud, to ennoble their minds with sublime contemplation. Where, they bid a temporary adieu to the tumultuous world, its

* Isa. lxiii. 7.

† Coloss. iv. 2.

‡ Psal. lxii. 8.

gay impertinence ; in order to maintain a more uninterrupted communion with that Mighty BEING, *who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers before HIM* *.

Welcome to Theron, was the shady bower ; welcome the cool aspect, and the musical flow of the water ; but more welcome than all, was the sight of his friend. Who lay reclined at the foot of an oak ; with a book half open in his hand, and his eye fixed upon the statue.

Ther. I know not, *Aspasio*, whether I must make an apology, for breaking in upon your retirement ; or call you to an account, for depriving the ladies of your company at the tea-table.

Asp. Indeed *Theron*, I have been so much delighted with the place ; with the alluring companion in my hand ; and the commanding object before me ; that I scarce observed, how the time stole away. I flatter myself, if you will take a seat by my side, and share my entertainment ; you will be more inclined to excuse, than to aggravate my fault.

Ther. Is *Tully* then (for I observe his name on the volume) your alluring companion ? And can such a devoted admirer of the bible, be so highly charmed with a Heathen classic ?—*St. Augustine* somewhere declares, that, though passionately fond, before his conversion, of *Tully's* writings ; yet, after that memorable change, he could no longer relish those once admired compositions ; because they were not sweetened, as he expresses himself, with the *melifluous* name of JESUS.

Asp. I am far from pretending to such an exalted pitch of devotion, as that seraphic father attained. I can spend a vacant minute on the delicate odes of *Horace* ; I can taste a refined entertainment in *Virgil's* beautiful poem ; and not be chagrined, though I find no mention of my SAVIOUR.—But when I hear a sermon, or peruse a religious treatise, which bestows neither dignity nor charms

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from that amiable and glorious name, I own myself extremely disappointed. Without the offices, the merits, or the grace of CHRIST, the sermon and the treatise appear as defective, as a body that is neither adorned with the head, nor enlivened with the heart.

Ther. I suppose then you cultivate an acquaintance with the *Grecian* and *Roman* authors, in order to improve your taste, and polish your style.

Asp. These, and, I am apt to think, more considerable advantages, may be derived from a proper application to their works. They may serve as so many shades, to set off with *heightened* lustre, the beauty and glory of the sacred oracles.

While I peruse *Plato's* ornamented page, or listen to *Cicero's* flowing periods, I am somewhat like the person, who amuses himself in a gallery of *painted flowers*. He is pleased with the curious creation of the pencil. But, finds none of that delicious fragrance, none of those *breathing sweets*, which meet him in the garden, and regale his sense from the blooming parterre.—So, here are brilliant sentiments, and a florid diction; delicate touches of wit, and bold strokes of description. But no discoveries of CHRIST JESUS—no displays of his ineffable love—no overtures of reconciliation with the blessed GOD. Nothing to yield us *solid* comfort, in our present state; or any *joyful* expectations, with regard to the approaching eternity.

Besides; when I converse with those celebrated geniuses of antiquity, who were the most erroneous, and the most judicious—the *most judicious* in their taste of polite literature; the *most erroneous*, in their apprehensions of invisible things; they shew me, what they never intended, the inexpressible need of *revelation*. They teach me to set a higher value on that inestimable gift. I bless the distinguishing goodness of Providence, which has cast my lot, not at *Athens*, but in IMMANUEL's land. —I say, with wonder and gratitude—"Why did not my heritage lie in those æras of religious dotage? Why did not my heritage lie in those regions of barbarism and delusion? Why am not I burning incense to idols; paying senseless adoration to sculptured stone; or worshipping, with de-

“testable ceremonies, a set of lascivious, debauched, and scandalous Deities.” Surely, Theron, from every perusal of those volumes, attended with such a reflection, we shall see the utmost reason to magnify the *tender mercies of our GOD*; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us*, and brought us out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel.

Permit me to mention another benefit, which may result from an occasional correspondence with those masterly writers—The streams may lead us to the inexhaustible fountain. Lead us to admire the *only wise GOD* our SAVIOUR, who has given such a shining vein of ingenuity to his rational creatures. As I read their works, and am charmed with their beauties, I would frequently reflect—“If the essays of a finite mind, and the compositions of a mortal pen, yield, yield such high satisfaction; what unknown delight must arise, from an uninterrupted communion with infinite wisdom? To stand—not at the feet of Homer, and attend the flights of his elevated imagination—Not in the presence of Solomon, and hear the dictates of his sagacious soul†—but, to stand in the courts of the LORD, and before throne of the LAMB. There to contemplate, without any interposing veil, the counsels of his unerring Providence; to have the mysteries of his redeeming love, laid fully open to our view; and receive the brightest manifestations of his amiable, his adorable, his unspeakable attributes?”

Ther. These are advantages, truly desirable, and equally obvious. Methinks, it *surprizes* me, that I should so much as propose them; and *grieves* me, that I should so long be deprived of them. A view to such very superior improvements will, I hope, render my future intercourse with those favourite authors, still more agreeable, and abundantly more beneficial.

* Luke i. 78.

† Happy, says the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. 2 Chron. ix. 7.

But let me ask, what passage was engaging your attention, this afternoon?

Asp. The great Orator's treatise, concerning the *nature of the Divine BEING*. That part especially, which proves his existence and perfections, from the formation of the human body.

Ther. Don't you perceive, that the Orator is almost as deficient, in the knowledge of his subject; as he is mistaken, in his ideas of the Supreme CAUSE?—The exquisite contrivance and inimitable workmanship of the human frame, were, in those early ages, but dimly discerned. It was the *infancy* of anatomy; when the very professors had scarcely had the qualifications of a modern pupil. Many of the received notions, were childish; almost all of them superficial.

Asp. Will my Theron then entertain me with a more accurate description of this wonderful structure?

Ther. How could you take occasion, Aspasio, from the hint I dropped, to conceive any such expectation? It is one thing to discover, another to correct, what is amiss. Many spectators can point out an accidental defect in some celebrated statue, or a small indelicacy in some valuable piece of painting; who are absolutely incapable of retouching the one, or supplying the other. Remember the cobbler and Apelles*.

Asp. I remember the story, but without relinquishing my request. No; since we are fallen upon this point, I cannot, I had almost said, I will not dismiss it, till I am favored with your explanations and remarks.—Especially, as you have made this branch of science, a part of your amusement; and not without the advantages of *anatomical* dissections. Whereas, I have very seldom applied my thoughts to the former, and never had an opportunity of being present at the latter.

Let me also observe, that our very situation favors, or rather suggests a topic of conversation. This deep embower-

* As some persons will be at a loss to understand the meaning of this hint, I refer them to the story, of the Cobbler and Apelles.

ing shade has drawn a curtain between us and the world. All the fine prospects of the country are excluded. We have scarce any thing left, but ourselves, to contemplate. And shall this be the only theme we neglect?

Ther. It is somewhat preposterous, I must confess, to pry into the recess of libraries; to ransack the cabinets of the *virtuosi*; and carry our search through the whole compass of external nature. Yet overlook the far more surprising curiosities, which abound in the composition of our own bodies. The rarities, the mysteries, the miracles, in-laid or looked up in these cabinets of flesh and blood.

Since you insist upon it, my observations, crude and extemporaneous as they are, shall submit themselves to your judgement. Provided, you will be content to receive, only a few of the outlines, and nothing like a finished draught.

Asp. Let me just hint, that the more circumstantial your account is, so much the more welcome it will be to your friend, and so much the more honorable to our common CREATOR. Let me also remind you of *Galen's* declaration: which, as it is judicious and important, will, I hope, induce you to enlarge your plan, and give full scope to your imagination.—“ Those treatises, which display the transcendent excellencies of the great CREATOR, compose
“ one of the noblest and most *acceptable* hymns. To acquaint ourselves with his sublime perfections; and point
“ out to others his infinite power, his unerring wisdom, his
“ boundless benignity; this is, according to my opinion, a
“ more substantial act of devotion, than to slay hecatombs
“ of victims at his altar, or kindle mountains of spices into
“ incense*.”—Theron, after pausing a few minutes, thus resumed his discourse.

Ther. When some master-builder undertakes to erect a magnificent edifice, he begins with the less decorated, but more substantial parts. Those which are to support, or those which are to contain the rest. This order, if you please, we will follow, in considering “ the earthly house
“ of our tabernacle †.”

First, You have a system of *bones*; cast into a variety of moulds; enlarged or contracted into a variety of sizes. All *strong*, that they may commodiously bear up the machine; yet *light*, that they may not encumber or clog the animal. Some *continuous*, and solid throughout. Some *bored* with an internal cavity, to contain the moistening marrow; and *perforated* with exceedingly fine ducts, to admit the nourishing vessels.—Insensible themselves, they are *covered* with a membrane* of exquisite sensibility. Which warns them of the approach, and secures them from the annoyance, of any injurious friction. At the same time, it preserves the adjoining muscular parts, from being fretted in their action, by the hard and rough substance of the bones.—Their *figures* are always most precisely fitted to their uses. They are generally larger at the extremities, than in the middle; that they may be joined more firmly, and not so easily dislocated.—The manner of their *articulation* is truly admirable, and remarkably various: yet never varied, without demonstrating some wise design, and answering some valuable end. Frequently, when two are united, the one is nicely rounded, and capped, with a smooth substance; the other is scooped into a hollow of the same dimensions, to receive the polished knob; and both are lubricated with an unctuous fluid, to yield the readiest rotation in the socket.

The *feet* compose the firmest and neatest pedestal: infinitely beyond all that statuary or architecture can accomplish; capable of altering its form, and extending its size, as different circumstances require. Besides performing the office of a pedestal, they contain a set of the nicest springs; which place the body in a variety of graceful attitudes, and qualify it for a multiplicity of advantageous motions. For the decent step, and the stately stride; the dance which swims, and the race we run.—The undermost part of the heel, and the extremity of the sole, are shod with a tough, insensible, sinewy substance. This we may call, a kind of *natural sandal*. It never wears out; never wants repair;

* The Periosteum.

and always prevents that undue compression of the vessels, which the weight of the body, in walking or standing, might otherwise occasion.—The *legs* and *thighs*, are like substantial and stately columns; articulated in such a manner, that they administer most commodiously to the act of walking; yet obstruct not the easy posture of sitting. The legs swell out, towards the top, with a genteel projection; and are wrought off, towards the bottom, with neat diminutions. Which variation lessens their bulk, at the same time that it increases their beauty.

The *ribs*, turned into a regular arch, are gently moveable, for the act of respiration. They form a secure lodgment for the lungs and the heart which, being some of the most distinguished and important organs of life, have their residence fortified by this strong semicircular rampart*. —The *backbone* is intended, not only to strengthen the body, and sustain its most capacious store-rooms; but also to bring down that communication of the brain, which is usually termed the *spinal marrow*. As an open chanel, it conveys, as a well-closed case, it guards this vital silver†; and, by several commodious outlets, transmits the animating treasure, into all the inferior parts. Was it only large strait, and hollow, it might have served these several purposes. But then the loins must have been inflexible, and every man impaled (not by the executioner, but by nature) on a stake co-eval with his existence. To avoid which, it consists of very short bones, closely knit together by intervening cartilages. This peculiarity of structure prevents dislocation; and gives the main pillar of our frame the *pliancy* of an *osier*, even while it retains the *firmness* of an *oak*.—By this means, it is a kind of continued joint; capable of various inflections, without bruizing the soft, mullary substance, which fills its cavity; without intercepting

* Thou has fenced me, secured my inward and vital parts, with bones and sinews.
Job. x. 11.—Crates Pectoris, is Virgil's expression.

† This is supposed to be the part, which Solomon describes by the silver cord: and is indeed like a cord, on account of its shape; like silver, on account of its colour.
Eccles. xii. 6.

the nervous fluid, which is to be detached from this grand reservoir; or diminishing that strength, which is necessary to support all the upper stories.—A formation so very peculiar in any other of the solids, must have been attended with great inconveniences. Here, it is unspeakably serviceable. Is, both for workmanship and situation, a masterpiece of creating skill, never enough to be admired.

The arms, pendent on either side, are exactly proportioned to each other; that the equilibrium of the structure may not be disconcerted. These, being the guards which defend*, and the ministers which serve the whole body, are fitted for the most diversified and extensive operations. Firm with bone, yet not weighty with flesh; and capable of performing, with singular expedition and ease, all manner of useful motions. They bend inwards, and stoop downwards; they wheel about, and throw themselves into whatever direction we please.—To these are annexed the hands; and all terminated by the fingers. Which are not, like the arms, of the same length, and of an equal bigness; but in both respects different. Which gives them a more graceful appearance, and a much greater degree of usefulness. Were they all flesh, they would be comparatively impotent: were they one entire bone, they would be utterly inflexible. But consisting of various little bones, and a multitude of muscles, what shape can they not assume? What service can they not perform?—Being placed at the end of the arm, the sphere of their action is exceedingly enlarged. This advantageous situation realizes the fable of *Briareus*; and renders a pair of hands, as serviceable as an hundred.—The extremities of the fingers, are an assemblage of tendinous fibres, most acutely sensible. Which, notwithstanding the delicacy of their texture, are destined to almost incessant employ, and frequently exercised among rugged objects. For this reason, they are overlaid with the nails, a sort of horny expansion: which, like a ferule, binds the flesh from being ungracefully flattened; and like a sheath, preserves the tender parts from injurious impressions.

* Called, in Solomon's figurative but elegant sketch of anatomy, *The Keepers of the House*, Eccles. xii. 3.

In the ministry of the hands, and activity of the fingers, we possess a case of the *finest instruments*; or a collection of the *noblest utensils*. Qualifying us for the execution of every work, which the projecting genius can devise, or the lavish fancy crave.—To these we are obliged for the beautiful statues, which have often entertained our eyes, in yonder solitary walks; and even for that melodious trumpet, which now addresses our ears, from the summer-house on the fish-pond.—These raise the lofty column, and turn the spacious arch.—These swell the majestic dome, and adjust the commodious apartment. Architecture, with all her striking beauties, and all her rich benefits, are the creation of the human hand.—Yielding to the strength of the hand, the tallest firs fall to the ground, and the largest oaks descend from the mountains. Fashioned by the dexterity of the hand, they accommodate the sailor with a *floating warehouse*; and circulate, from *Britain to Japan*, the productions of nature, and the improvements of art.—Obedient to the human hand, metals ascend from their subterraneous beds; and compose the most substantial parts of that *curious machine*,* which transmits far and near, to the monarch's palace, and to the peasant's hut, such treasures of wisdom and knowledge, as *the gold and crystal cannot equal*.†

Among the *Egyptians*, the hand was the symbol of strength: among the *Romans*, it was an emblem of fidelity: and I think, it may, among all nations, be looked upon as the ensign of *authority*. It is the original and the universal sceptre; that which not only represents, but ascertains our dominion, over all the elements, and over every creature.—Though Providence has not given us the strength of the horse, the swiftness of the greyhound, or the sagacious scent of the spaniel; yet, directed by the understanding, and enabled by the hand, we can subject them to our will, turn them to our advantage; and, in this sense, make them *all our own*.—These hands (surprising to relate!) these

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* The Printing-press.

† Job xxviii. 17.

short hands have found out a way, whereby they can dive to the bottom of the ocean; can penetrate the bowels of the earth; and reach from shore to shore. These *feeb* hands can manage the wings of the wind; can arm themselves with the rage of the fire: and press into their service the forcible impetuosity of the waters.—How eminent is the dignity! how extensive the agency of the hand! it would require more eloquence, than your orator possessed, to display the former; and more pages, than your book contains, to describe the latter.—How greatly then are we indebted to our indulgent CREATOR, for accommodating us with this most useful, this most distinguishing, this invaluable member!

Above all, is the *head*; a majestic dome, elevated on the neck, and designed for the residence of the brain. It is framed in exact conformity to this important purpose; ample, to receive; strong, to uphold; and firm, to defend, what is the origin of all our sense and all our motion.—As the head resembles the *general's* tent in the army, or the *monarchs* palace in a city; it has a communication established with all, even the most inferior and remote, parts of the system. It has outlets and avenues, for the ready dispatch of couriers to all quarters; and for the reception of speedy intelligence, on every interesting occasion. It is furnished with lodgments, wherein to post centinels of various characters, and appointed for various offices.—To expedite their operations, whether they are employed in reconnoitring what passes without, or examining what claims admittance within; the whole turns upon a curious pivot, most nicely contrived, to afford the largest and freest circumvolutions.

This stately capital, is screened from heat; defended from cold; and very much beautified, by a copious growth of hair. Which flows down from the parted forelock in decent curls; and hangs, mantling on the cheeks, clustering on the shoulders.—A decoration,* incomparably more

delicate, than any or all the orders of architecture know how to compose; and so perfectly light, that it no way incumbers, nor any way incommodes the wearer.

While many animals creep on the ground: while all of them are prone in their posture; or their aspect: the attitude of man is erect.*—Which is by far the most graceful; has an air of dignity, and bespeaks superiority, and is suited to the post of command.—It is by far the most commodious; enables us to survey the universe, and contemplate the heavens; fits us for the prosecution of every grand scheme, and facilitates the success of all our extensive designs.—It is likewise attended with the greatest safety; being, if not less than any other position exposed to dangers, yet more happily contrived to repel or avoid them.

Asp. May it not likewise remind us of our exalted original, and our sublime end? Our original, which was the breath of the **ALMIGHTY**, and the spirit of the **MOST HIGH**. Our end, which is not the soil we tread on, or any of its low productions, but the heaven of heavens, and the things that are above.

But not to divert from our subject; which, in my friend's manner of handling it, is as entertaining as it is instructive.—The bones (to carry on your own allusion, are only the rafters, the beams, the shell of the living edifice. You have raised the walls, and laid the floors. You have made the proper divisions, and left the necessary apertures. But, in every finished house, the roof is covered; and the rooms are wainscoted. The sashes are hung, and the doors turn upon their hinges. The grates are fixed, and the stairs ascend. Within, the lodgings are furnished; without, the front is ornamented. All is rendered commodious for domestic use, and graceful to the external view.

Ther. This likewise is executed by the sovereign, the divine **ARTIFICER**.—Here are ligaments; a tough and strong arrangement of fibres; to unite the several limbs;

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
God-like erect! with native honor clad,
In naked majesty seem'd lords of all.

and render, what would otherwise be a disjointed unweildy jumble; a well-compacted and self-manageable system. Membranes; or thin and flexible tunicles; appointed to enwrap the fleshy parts; to form a connexion between some, and make a separation between others.*

Arteries, the rivers of our little world,† or the aqueducts of the organized metropolis. Some of which ascend to the head: others spread themselves over the shoulders: some extend to the arms: some descend to the feet: and striking out, as they go, into numberless smaller canals, visit the streets, the alleys, and every individual apartment of the vital city.—These, being wide at their origin, and lessening, as they branch themselves, check the rapid impetus of the blood. To sustain this shock, they are endued with uncommon strength: by performing this service, they oblige the crimson current to pass into the narrowest defiles, and distribute itself into all quarters.—The blood, thrown from the heart dilates the arteries, and their own elastic force contracts them. By which means they vibrate in proper places, very perceivably against the finger; bring advices of the utmost importance to the physician; and very much assist him, both in discovering the nature of diseases, and prescribing for their respective cures.—The larger arteries, where-ever the body is formed for incurvation, are situate on the bending side: lest, being stretched to an improper length by the inflection, their dimensions should be lessened, and the circulating fluid retarded.—They are not, like several of the considerable veins, laid so near the surface, as to be potrusive of the skin; but are deposited to a proper depth in the flesh. And, generally speaking, the larger their size, the deeper is their situation. Which renders them more secure from external accidents; and enables them, like a main pipe lodged in the center

* The intestines are fastened to each other by the mesentery. The breast is divided into two cavities by the mediastinum. Both which are reckoned among the membranes.

† A human body was called by the antients, the microcosm; that is, the world in miniature. An abridgment or epitome, of all that is convenient and useful, or that is elegant and majestic, in the whole system of created things.

of a street, to transmit their smaller ducts, more easily and more speedily, to the extremity of their several spheres. This situation conceals likewise those starts and resiliations of the pulse, which, if apparent, would discompose the most sedate, and disfigure the most comely countenance.— Could we cast our eye upon the river, which runs through the neighbouring meadow, we might observe several mills intersecting the stream. The waters at those places, if not entirely stopped, drain away very slowly. In consequence of this obstruction, the lower channels would be sunk dry, and the upper ones swallowed into a flood. To obviate both these inconveniencies, low-shots are provided: which, carrying off the surcharge, prevent a glut above, and supply the banks below.

In those parts of the body, which are most liable to pressure, much the same expedient takes place. The arteries *inoscute*; or, breaking into a new track, they fetch a little circuit, in order to return and communicate again with the main road. So that, if any obstacle blocks up or straitens the direct passage; the current, by diverting to this new channel, eludes the impediment; maintains an uninterrupted flow; and soon regains its wonted course.

Veins are appointed to receive the blood from the arteries, and reconvey it to the heart.—Small at their rise, and enlarging as they advance, they are void of any pulsation. In the e the pressure of the circulating fluid, is not near so forcible as in the arterial tubes; for which reason, their texture is considerably slighter. Such an exact oeconomist is nature, even amidst all her liberality!*

In many of these canals, the current, though widening continually, and acquiring a proportionable increase of gravity, is obliged to push its way against the perpendicular. By which circumstance, it is exposed to the hazard of falling back, and overloading the vessels; if not of suppressing the animal motion.

* A parallel instance of frugality is observable in the arteries. Whose coats are spun thinner, as the diameter of the vessels becomes smaller, and the pressure of the blood weaker.

For a security against this danger, valves are interposed at proper distances. Which are no hindrance to the regular passage, but prevent the reflux, sustain the augmented weight; and facilitates a progress to the grand receptacle. This auxiliary contrivance comes in, where the blood is constrained to climb; but is dismissed where the steep ascent ceases, and such a precaution would be needless.

Here are glands, whose office it is, to filtrate the passing fluid. Each of these glands is an assemblage of vessels, complicated and intervolved, with seeming confusion, but with perfect regularity.

As some kind of sieves transmit the dust, and retain the corn; others bolt out the meal, and hold back the bran; so, some of these glandulous strainers draw off the finest, others the grossest parts of the blood. Some, like the distiller's alembic, *sublimate*;* others, like the common sewers, *defecate*†. Each forms a secretion, far more curious than the most admired operations of chemistry; while all are necessary for the support of life, or conducive to the comfort of the animal.

Muscles, wove in nature's nicest loom; composed of the slenderest fibres, yet endued with incredible strength; fashioned after a variety of patterns, but all in the highest taste for elegance, conveniency, and usefulness.—These, with their tendons annexed, constitute the instruments of motion. The former, contracting their substance, operate like the pulley in mechanics. The latter, resembling the cord, are fastened to a bone, or some partition of flesh: and, following the muscular contraction, actuate the part into which they are inserted. This, and all their functions they execute, not like a sluggish beast of burden, but quick as the lightning.

Nerves, very minute tubes; derived from the brain, and permeated by an exquisitely subtle fluid. Which gliding

* The glandulous substance of the brain; which secretes the animal spirits.

† The liver and kidneys. The former of which separates the gall. The latter drains off a fluid, which, being sufficiently known, need not be named.

into the muscles, sets them on work; diffuses the power of sensation through the body; or, returning from any impression without, gives all heedful intelligence to the soul.—Vesicles, distended with an unctuous matter; in some places compose a soft cushion for nature; in other places, they fill up her vacuities, and smooth her inequalities. *Inwardly*, they supple the several movements of the active machine. *Outwardly*, they render its appearance plump, well-proportioned, and graceful.

It is said of the virtuous woman; *She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet**; or as we read in the margin, *with double garments†*. Whether the admitted or the ejected translation is best, I am not a competent judge. But that the ever bountiful GOD has, in this most warm, comfortable, and secure manner, clothed our vital parts, is an undoubted fact. One of the two garments, the flesh, has already been examined. Another, the skin, is still to be considered. This is a kind of surtout, exactly fitted, and superinduced over the whole. Like our LORD's vesture, it is without seam, from the top throughout. It consists of the most delicate net-work; whose meshes‡ are minute, and whose threads are|| multiplied, even to a prodigy.—The meshes so *minute*, that nothing passes them which is discernable by the eye; though they discharge, every moment, myriads and myriads of superfluous incumbrances from the body. The steam, arising from the warm business transacted within, is carried off by these real, though imperceptible funnels§. This evacuation constitutes, what we usually call, *insensible perspiration*.—The threads so multiplied that neither the point of the smallest needle, nor the incom-

* Prov. xxxi. 21.

† See Gen. vi. 19, 20.

‡ The Pores of the Cuticula.

| The nervous fibres, and other vessels of the cutis.

§ These are somewhere prettily styled cutaneous chimneys; and no wonder they are imperceptible, if, as Mr. Leuwenhoeck avirms, a single grain of sand, will cover no less than 125,000.

parably nicer spear of a gnat, nor even the invisible lancet of a flea, can pierce any single part, without causing an uneasy sensation and a suffusion of blood; consequently, without wounding, even by so small a puncture, both a nerve and a vein*.

The veins, either pervading, or lying parallel with this fine transparent coat, *beautify* the human structure; those parts especially, which are most conspicuous, and intended for public view. The pliant wrist, and the taper arm, they variegate with an inlay of living sapphire. They spread vermillion over the lips†, and plant roses in the cheeks. While the eye, tinged with glossy jet, or sparkling with the blue of heaven, is fixed in an orb of polished crystal‡. Inasmuch that the earthly tabernacle exhibits the nicest proportions, and displays the richest graces. Such nice *proportions*, as afford the most correct model for statuary and architecture, such *rich graces*, as the canvass never bore, as painting imitates in vain.

Asp. How just in itself, and how pertinent to our purpose, is that well-known acknowledgement of the sacred and royal anatomist; “*I am curiously wrought!*” There is “a variety, a regularity, and an elegance, in the texture of my body; in the formation and arrangement of these bones and muscles, these veins and arteries;—resembling shall I say?—rather, infinitely surpassing, the most costly and admired pieces of embroidery.” Even those, which were wrought under the direction of inspired wisdom; and compose the rich sacerdotal vestments||, or the grand and sacred ornaments of the tabernacle§.

It is one of the finest similitudes, which the whole circle of polite arts could afford. And, as used by the *Hebrew*

* A blood-vessel at least.

† Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, Cant. iv. 3. Like a thread for their delicate shape; like a thread of scarlet for their glowing colour.

‡ Solomon has compared the eyes to the fish-pools in Heshbon. A comparison, as just, as it is noble.

|| Exod. xxviii. 39.

§ Exod. xxvi. 36.

Poet as referring to the venerable embellishments of the sanctuary, receives a peculiar dignity. Yet every comparison, fetched from the performances of mankind, must necessarily debase the matchless subject.—All the enrichments, which the needle can give, or the most *splendid silks* receive, are rude, are coarse, are mere sack-cloth, when set in opposition to the consummate perfection of the fleshly web. As indeed all the celebrated *palaces, amphitheatres, temples*, which ever adorned the most magnificent cities in the world, are but a heap of confusion, if compared with the symmetry and beauty of the bodily fabric.—And, what is beyond measure marvelous, all these wonders of mechanism and decoration arose—not from the purer elements—not from the more refined parts of the creation—but from dust, *dust of the ground*.* How easily, Theron, can that stupendous ARTIFICER renew our hearts and transform our souls into his own image! Who could raise such delicate and majestic edifices; the blooming countenance, and the graceful mien; the fine turn of shape, and the enchanting harmony of features; could raise them all from particles—despicable particles of the trodden soil!

I could not forbear interposing this remark. Because it tends to manifest our CREATOR's glory, to encourage our hopes, and strengthen our faith. Otherwise, I should be angry with myself, for interrupting your discourse.—Pray, go on with your description of the animal oeconomy. Only let me observe, that such a course of incessant action, must exhaust the fluids; must waste the solids; and unless both are supplied with proper recruits, must gradually weaken, and at length totally destroy the machine.

Ther. For this reason, it is furnished with the organs, and endued with the powers of nutrition.—Teeth; the foremost, thin and sharp; fitted to bite asunder the food, or cut † off such a portion, as the mouth can conveniently manage.

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* The LORD GOD formed man of the dust of the ground, Gen. ii. 7.

† Called therefore, incisivi.

The hindermost, broad and strong; indented, like the surface of a mill-stone,* with small cavities, and jagged with little asperities. Which qualify them to grind in pieces, whatever is transmitted to their operation.

Were the teeth, like our other bones, covered with the usual membrane, the act of chewing would always occasion great uneasiness; and, when any hard substance is eaten, might even lacerate the tender tegument. Were they left without any sort of covering; they would suffer from the inclemencies of the air, and be liable to the penetration of liquors. In which case, they must soon become soft and unfit for service, or be corrupted, and entirely perish.

To guard against these disadvantages, they are curiously glazed, or overlaid with a neat enamel; as white as ivory, and harder than the bone itself. Which renders them an ornament to the mouth;† secures them from various injuries; and exempts them from pain in the office of mastication.

As the rims and cushions of a billiard-table, keep the ball from flying off? and send it back into the green area, for repeated essays of skill; so the lips prevent the food from slipping out of the mouth; and, assisted by the tongue, return it to the renewed attrition of the grinders.

While the lips, in concert with the cheeks, are employed in this work, their motion compresses the circumjacent glands; and, from innumerable little orifices, a thin pellucid liquor‡ exsudes. Which moistens the attenuated food, and prepares it for more easy digestion.

* Styled accordingly and —We find neither of these kinds in the new-born babe. As milk is, for a considerable time its apparent food, teeth would be of no service to the infant itself. As it is to preserve the tender nipple for this milky sustenance, teeth would be painful and prejudicial to the nurse. Therefore nature has postponed the formation of these fine implements till they become both necessary and beneficial.

† This ornamental furniture of the mouth, is, in the grand oriental manner, described by Solomon. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep, that are even shorn, which come up from the washing, Cant. iv.

‡ The saliva or spittle.

When the mouth remains inactive, these fountains are closed. But, when it is exercised, either in speaking or eating, their moisture then being peculiarly necessary, they never fail to give out a sufficient quantity.

When the soldier charges his carbine, the cartridge could not make its way to the bottom, without the protrusion of the rammer. Neither could the food which we receive at the mouth, descend, by the force of its own weight, through a narrow and clammy channel, into the stomach. To effectuate therefore, and expedite its passage, muscles, both straight and circular, are provided. The former, enlarge the cavity of the throat, and afford a more easy admittance; the latter, closing behind the descending aliment, press it downwards, and finish the deglutition.—Before the food enters the gullet, it must of necessity pass over the orifice of the wind-pipe; consequently, must be in no small danger of falling upon the lungs. Which would, if not entirely obstruct the breath, yet occasion violent coughing,* and great inconveniencies.

To obviate this evil, the all-foreseeing CONTRIVER has placed a moveable lid, or hung a cartilaginous draw-bridge.† When any the smallest particle of food advances to the stomach, this lid is pulled down and shut close; but, the very moment the morsel is swallowed, the cover, instinctive as it were, springs up and leaves the passage open. By this two-fold artifice, the important passage is always barred and made sure, against any noxious approaches; yet is always left free for the necessary accession of air, and commodious for the purposes of respiration.

When the maltster prepares his grain for the transmutations of the brewhouse; he suffers it to lie, several hours, steeping in the cistern; before it is fit, to be spread upon the floor, or dried on the kiln.

The meat and drink likewise must remain, a considerable time, in the stomach; before they are of a proper consist-

* This is what we experience, when, in eating or drinking, any thing goes (as is commonly, and not improperly said) the wrong way.

† Called the Epiglottis.

ence and temperature, either for the tender coats, or the delicate operation of the bowels.—For which purpose, that great receiver is made—strong to bear—capacious to hold—and so curiously contrived, as to lay a temporary embargo* upon its contents. Here, they are lodged in the very center of warmth, and concocted by the most kindly combination of heat and humidity. Here, they are saturated with other fermenting or diluting juices; and are kneaded, as it were, by the motion of the stomach, and compression of the neighbouring parts. So that every the minutest fragment is separated; the whole is reduced to a tenuity, abundantly finer than the exactest grinding could effect; and all is worked up into the smoothest, most nicely mixed pulp imaginable.—From hence it is dislodged, by a gently acting force; and passes, by a gradual transition, into the cavity of the intestines.

Near the entrance, punctual as the porter in his lodge, waits the gall bladder;† ready to transfuse its acrimonious, but salutary juices, on the advancing aliment. Which dissolve its remaining viscidities; scour the passage of the intestines; and keep all its fine apertures clear.

This bag, as the stomach fills, is elevated by the distention; as the stomach empties, is proportionably depressed. The former posture brings on a discharge, the latter occasions a suppression of the bile. It is furnished also with a valve, of a very peculiar, but most convenient form;‡ through which the detersive liquid, cannot hastily pour, but must gently ooze.—Admirable construction! which, without any care or consciousness of ours, prohibits an immoderate effusion, yet ascertains the needful supply.

Sufficiently charged with this adventitious fluid, the nutritive mass pursues its way through the intestines. Whose meanders, are incomparably more curious and wonderful,

* Which is quite contrary to the oeconomy of the gullet; though they are not only contiguous to each other, but a continuation of the same tube.

† The gall-bladder is situate upon the lower margin of the liver; and to secrete the bilious juice, is supposed to be the principal ule of that largest of glands.

‡ A spual form.

than the mazes of the Dædalean labyrinth. They are actuated with a worm-like or undulatory motion;* which protrudes the received aliment, and forces its fine milky particles into the lacteal vessels. These are a series of the most delicate strainers; ranged, in countless multitudes, all along the sides of the winding passage. Each so nicely framed, as to admit the nutrimental balmy juices, and reject the gross excrementitious dregs.

Had the intestines been strait, they must have been short. Then the food might have gone through and escaped, without resigning a sufficient quantity of its nourishing particles. Therefore, this grandest of all the vital ducts, is artfully convolved, that it may be greatly extended: that, it may afford nature an opportunity, of sifting more thoroughly whatever passes, and of detaining whatever may serve her purposes.

Lest such lengths of entrails, should be entangled among themselves, or be cumbrous to the wearer, they are packed into the neatest folds, and lie within a narrow compass. They are at least six times longer,† than the body which contains them. Yet are they lodged, not crowded; in a part, not in the whole region, of the lower belly. And amidst this small space, have sufficient room to execute the nicest and most important functions.

Though the alimentary substance can never mistake its way; yet it may, through some accidental impediment, attempt to return backward. In this case, a valve intervenes; and renders, what would be extremely pernicious; almost always impracticable.

As the whole proceeds in this serpentine course, it is perpetually sending off detachments of nutritious juices. In consequence of which, it would lose its soft temperature; might become rugged, and pain the tender parts;

* Styled vermicular or peristaltic.

† According to this calculation, they must measure, in a pretty tall man, more than thirty-six feet — The substance of the bowels, though thin to a delicacy, is strong to a wonder. The skin of an ox-gut, I am told, will endure the blows of the gold-beater's hammer, for many months; nay for several years.

perhaps, be hindered from sliding on to its final exit. To prevent such an obstruction, glands are posted in proper places, must discharge a lubricating fluid; which aids the progress of the mass, and renews the secretion of the chyle. Till all that remains of the one, is clean drawn off; and the other—but here you must excuse me; and for my neglect of farther particularity, your author shall make an apology; *Quemadmodum autem reliquiae cibi depellantur, tum astringentibus sc intestinis, tum relaxantibus, haud sane difficile dictu est: sed tamen praetereundum est, ne quid habeat injucunditatis Oratio.*

The chyle, drawn off by all the secretory orifices, is carried along millions of the finest ducts,* and lodged in several commodious cells.† As a traveller, by baiting upon the road, and taking proper refreshment, is better qualified to pursue his journey: so the chyle, diverting to those little inns, is mixed with a thin, diluting, watery substance; which renders it more apt to flow, and more fit for use.—From hence it is conveyed to one common receptacle,‡ and mounts through a perpendicular tube. When provision or ammunition is transmitted to an army, it generally passes under an escort of able troops. As this milky fluid is the immediate support, and principal nourishment of the whole system, its conveyance is guarded with singular caution. The perpendicular tube, not having sufficient force of its own, is laid contiguous to the great artery; whose strong pulsation drives on the creeping fluid; enables it to overcome the steep ascent, and unload its precious treasure at the very door of the heart.—Here, it enters the trunk of a large vein, most conveniently opened for its reception. It enters in a slanting or oblique direction,

* Fine indeed! since their orifices, through which they admit the chyle, are not discoverable even by the very best microscopes. To this prodigiously nice construction it is owing, that nothing enters the substance of the blood, but what is smaller than the smallest arteries in the system, and thereby fitted to pass through the finest capillary vessels, without causing any obstruction.

† The glands of the mesentery.

‡ The receptaculum chyli; a reservoir, placed near the left kidney.

By this method of approach, it avoids thwarting, and coincides with the purple stream; which, instead of obstructing its admission, expedites its passage; and, instead of being a bar to exclude it, becomes a vehicle to waft it.—Its entrance is farther secured by a valve, whose ministration is doubly serviceable: shutting the aperture against the refluxent blood, in case it should offer to obtrude itself; but opening a free, safe, and easy avenue, to introduce this manna of nature.

The blood, through every stage of its ample circuit, having sustained great expences; being laid under contribution, by every gland in the whole system; and having supplied myriads of the capillary vessels, with matter for insensible perspiration; must be very much impoverished. But is most opportunely recruited, by this accession of chyle.—Yet though recruited, it is not refined. In its present crude state, it is absolutely unqualified to perform the vital tour, or carry on the animal functions. Therefore, by a grand apparatus of muscular fibres, it is wafted into the lungs; and pours a thousand, thousand rills into either lobe.

In the cells, the spongy cells of this amazing laboratory, it imbibes the influences of the external air; its heterogeneous parts are thoroughly incorporated; and its whole substance is made cool, smooth, and florid.—Thus improved, thus exalted, it is transmitted to the left ventricle of the HEART; a strong, active, indefatigable muscle; placed in the very center of the system. Impelled by this beating engine, part shoots upward; and sweeps, with a bounding impetus, into the head. There, it impregnates the prolific fields of the brain; and forms those subtle spirituous dews, which impart sense to every nerve, and communicate motion to every limb. Part flows downward; rolls the reeking current through all the lower quarters; and dispenses the nutrimental stores, even to the meanest member, and the minutest vessel.

Observe, how the stately thames, and the rapid rhine, refresh the forests and the groves; water the towns, which croud their banks; and make the meadows they intersect, laugh and sing. So, only with an incomparably richer

fluid, and with infinitely more numerous streams, this human river laves the several regions of the body. Transfusing vigour, and propagating health, through the whole.

But, how shall a stream, divided into myriads of channels, and pervading innumerable tracts, how shall this be brought back again to its source? Should any portion, like your lake-waters after a land-flood, deviate from their course, or be unable to return—putrefaction would take place—a nuisance would arise—death might ensue. Therefore the all-wise CREATOR has connected the extremity of the arteries, with the beginning of the veins. So that the same force, which darts the crimson wave through the former, drives it through the latter. Thus it is reconducted, without the least extravasation, to the great salient cistern. There played off afresh, it renews and perpetuates the vital functions.

Where two *opposite* currents would be in danger of clashing, a fibrous excrescence interposes*; which, like a projecting pier, breaks the stroke of each, and throws both into their proper receptacle.—When the wafture is to be *speedy*, the channels either forbear to wind in their course†, or to lessen in their dimensions‡. When the progress is to be retarded, the tubes are twined into various convolutions||, or their diameter contracted into a narrower size.—Modeled by these judicious rules; guarded by these wise precautions; the living flood never discontinues its interchangeable tide; but, night and day, whether we sleep or wake, still perseveres to sally *briskly* through the arteries, and return *softly* through the veins.

Such astonishing expedients are used, to concoct, digest, assimilate the food! To convert it into Chyle—to blend it with the blood—and to distribute both through the body!

* In the point, where the streams, from the vena cava and vena ascendens, meet.

† In the great artery which descends to the feet.

‡ In every interval, between all the ramifications.

|| In the vessels, which carry the blood to the brain; which form the viscous secretions; and indeed which constitute all the glands.

By means of which, the animal constitution is nourished and maintained. In youth, its bulk is increased; in age, its decays are repaired; and it is kept in tenable condition for the soul, during the space of seventy or eighty years.

These are a few, and but a *very few* instances of the contrivance, regularity, and beauty, which are observable in the human frame. Attentive enquirers discover deeper footsteps of design, and *more refined* strokes of skill. Discover them, not only in the grand and most distinguished parts, but in every limb, and in every organ: I may venture to add, in every fibre that is extended, and in every globule* that flows.

Asp. How various is the system of the body! Various, in the substance, as well as in the shape, of the several parts! yet all wrought of the one and the *same* original mass!—Is it not strange, that the very same speck of matter, should spread itself into a lining of skin, and swell into beds of flesh; should be extended into soft sinews, and hardened into strong bones; should here be impenetrable as the solid rock, there be transparent as the finest gauze? †—Is it not exceedingly strange, that one and the same scrap of simple uncompounded materials, should form the columns and the rafters; should compose the aqueducts and reservoirs; should be sufficient to execute both the masonry and the joinery: in short, to constitute the shell, the furniture, and all the ornaments, of the complete edifice in the world!

The system I observe, though various, is uniform. Amidst the greatest multiplicity of parts, the most perfect subsists. No one hinders, but each assists, the operation of another; and all conspire to the benefit and preservation

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* The extreme minuteness of the globules, which form the red part of our blood, is one exemplification, of this remark. If, as Mr. Lewenhoeck computes, every globule be 29,000 times smaller than the smallest grain of sand.

† Rock, gauze—this is particularly observable, in the construction of the teeth, and the composition of the gums.

of the whole.—Most judiciously has the great apostle touched this subject! most happily has he applied it, to illustrate the reasonableness, and enforce the practice, both of personal and social duties, of private content and public concord.

The body, he observes, *is not one member, but a many*. To each of which some peculiar and needful office is assigned. So that the foot, though placed in the lowest order, and destined to serve on the very ground, has no reason to reckon itself a worthless outcast; or to say, *Because I am not the head, I am not of the body**. Neither has the *head*, in its exalted station, and amidst its honorable functions, any cause to despise the inferior limbs; or to say, with contempt and self-sufficiency, *I have no need of you*.—If there were no feet, what would become of the locomotive faculty? Or how could the body convey itself from one place to another? If there were no hands, what should we do for the instruments of action? Or how could the animal frame be defended and accommodated?—Nay, the parts, which seem to be less honorable, are necessary. Even those, which form the sediments, or throw off the dregs, are of the last importance to life and its comforts. Should those be obstructed in their action, the most raging torment ensues; should the obstructions continue, death is the inevitable consequence.

By this wise adjustment, there is no schism in the body; no separate or interfering ends are pursued by the members; but the safety and support of each are the one undivided care of all.

Thus should it be among men, and among christians; in the civil community, and in the catholic church. There is in both a *subordination* of persons, but a *concatenation* of interests. For which reason, a general agreement should take place, and a mutual subserviency to each other's welfare.

The *meanest* have no cause to be dissatisfied with their condition; but to acquiesce in the unerring disposal of

Providence, and cheerfully contribute their share to the common good.

The *highest* should condescend to men of low estate; and maintain a regard for the well-being of the poorest, as that which is intimately connected with their own.—In a word; *each* should feel a tender concern for all; rejoicing in their happiness, and studying to establish it; sympathizing with their miseries, and endeavouring to relieve them.

I am sure, my *Theron* will be pleased with this fine comparison, used by the apostle; and adapted to purposes, at once so noble and so benevolent. Especially, as it receives additional propriety and force from his own observations.—But I have one more enquiry to make.

Your system, though *organized*, though endued with a principle of *motion*, and furnished with the powers of *nutrition*, is still destitute of *sense*.—The creation abounds with objects, fitted to yield the most refined entertainment. The sun impurples the robe of morning, and stars bespangle the curtains of night. Flowers of silver whiteness, and of golden lustre, enamel the ground. Fruits of all radiant hues, and of every delicious taste, hang amiably dangling on the boughs.

Airs also, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves,

But we hear of no capacities, formed for the *enjoyment* of these various delights. Without which, the breath of fields must lose its reviving fragrance; the whispering grove must degenerate into sullen silence; and nature's book of knowledge, all fair and instructive, be no better than a vast unmeaning blank.

Ther. Therefore, the great CREATOR, profusely gracious to mankind, has made us a present, an inestimable present of the *senses*. To be the inlets of innumerable pleasures, and the means of administering innumerable advantages.

High in the head, bright and conspicuous as a star in the brow of evening, is placed the *eye*. In this elevated

situation, like a centinel posted in his watch-tower, it commands the most enlarged prospect.—Consisting only of simple fluids, inclosed in thin tunicles, it conveys to our apprehension all the graces of blooming nature, and all the glories of the visible heavens.

How prodigiously wonderful ! that an image of the *hugest* mountains, and a transcript of the most *diversified* landscapes, shall enter the small circlet of the pupil!—How surprisingly artful ! that the rays of light, like an inimitable pencil, should paint on the optic nerves ; paint in an instant of time ; paint in their *truest* colours, and *exactest* lineaments, every species of external objects !

The eye is so tender, that a slight accident, scarce perceivable by some other parts of the body, would be very injurious to its delicate frame. It is guarded therefore with remarkable circumspection, and the most solicitous care : with a care, evidently proportioned to its nice texture, and extensive usefulness. It is *intrenched* deep in the head ; and *barricadoed*, on every side, with a strong fortification of bones.

As the incursion of the smallest fly would incommode the polished surface, it is farther defended by two substantial *curtains*, hung on a most slender cartilaginous rod. Which secure it, not barely from blows, and from any hurtful attrition, but also from every troublesome annoyance.

In sleep, when there is no occasion to exercise the sense, but an absolute necessity to protect the organ, these curtains *spontaneously* close. At any time, they will *fly* together with a motion, quick as the alarm of fear, I had almost said, quicker than thought itself. At all times they are lined with an extremely fine sponge,* wet with its own *native dew*. Which lubricate the eye-ball ; oil, as it were, its wheels ; and fit it for a course of unwearied activity.—At the end of this skinny mantelet (if I may use

* The glandula lachrymalis and its ducts ; opening on the inner part of the eye-lid, and secreting the fluid, which Theron calls his oil ; because, it irrigates the eye-ball, and facilitates its motion.

the military style) is planted a range of bristly *pallisadoes*.* Which keep out the least mote; ward off even the straggling atom; and moderate the otherwise too potent impressions of the sun-beams.

The *brows* are a kind of natural *pent-house*, thatched and arched with curious wreaths of hair. The thatch lies as smooth, as the linen that is neatly plaited, and newly ironed. It serves to divert the sweat, from trickling into the eyes, and offending them with its brine. The *arches* are so finely coloured, and so elegantly turned, that they set off the whiteness of the forehead, and bestow additional grace on the whole countenance.—Because, in our waking hours, there is almost an incessant call for those little orbs, they run upon the finest *casters*; rolling upwards or downwards, to the right-hand or to the left; with the utmost speed, and with equal ease. Which circumstance, added to the flexibility of the neck, renders our *two* eyes as useful, as if the whole body, like the living creature in St. John's vision, was *full of eyes before and behind*.†

The *ear* consists of an outward porch and inner rooms, with tools of the most admirable contrivance and finished workmanship. The contrivance and the workmanship incomparably nicer, than the designs of *Palladio*, or the architecture of *Solomon's* temple; though the former were drawn from the magnificent monuments of *Rome*, though the latter was built in the taste of *heaven*. Yea; so consummately nice is the structure of this organ, that GOD, the only wise GOD, is not ashamed to be called its artificer. *He that planted the ear*,† is to be found among the titles of the exalted JEHOVAH.—In one very remarkable peculiarity, this minute fabric resembles that sacred edifice,

* The hairs, which arise upon the extremities of the eye-lash, grow only to a certain convenient length, and never stand in need of cutting.—They are not flacid and pendulous, like those of the head; but stiff and prominent like bristles. The first sort would be troublesome, the last is beneficial.

† Rev. iv. 6.

‡ The psalmist uses the word *planted*, to describe the situation of the ear; and the word *formed*, to denote the structure of the eye. In both which expressions, there seems to be the utmost propriety and the greatest delicacy.

the porch being loftier* than any other part of the building.

The *porch*, I call that semicircular lodge, which stands somewhat prominent from the head; and is—not *soft* and *sinking* as flesh, lest it should absorb the sound, rather than promote the repercussion; not hard and stubborn as bone, lest it should occasion painful inconveniencies, when we repose ourselves on either side—but of a *cartilaginous* substance, covered with a tight expansion of skin, and wrought into irregular bends and hollows. Which, like circling hills, or surrounding rocky shores, collect the wandering undulations of the air; and transmit them, with a vigorous impulse, to the finely stretched membrane of the *tympa-num*.—The *avenue*, or narrow entry, is secured from the insinuating attempts of insects, by a *morass* (shall I say?) of bitter and viscous matter: disgusting to their taste, and embarrassing to their feet.—The *hammer* and the *anvil*; the *stisrup* and the *drum*; the winding labyrinths, and the sounding galleries; these, and othes pieces of mechanism, all instrumental to the power of hearing, are beyond description curious.

Amazingly nice must be the formation, and inconceivably exact the tension of the auditory nerves! since they correspond with the smallest tremors of the atmosphere, and easily distinguish their most subtile variations. With the gentle gales that fan us, or even with the ruder blasts that assault us, these delicate strings are but little affected. Whereas, they are perfect unisons with those fine, those significant agitations of the air, which the acutest touch is unable to discern. These living chords, tuned by an Almighty hand, and diffused through the echoing isles, and sonorous cells—these receive the impressions of sound, and propagate them to the brain. These give existence to the charms of music, and reciprocate the rational entertainments of discourse. These treat my Aspasio with the melody of the woodland choirs, and afford me the superior pleasure of my friend's conversation.

* Compare 1 Kings vi. 2; with 2 Chron. iii. 4.

The eye perceives only the objects that are before it; whereas, the ear warns us of transactions, that pass above us, behind us, all around us.—The eye is useless amidst the gloom of night; and cannot carry its observation, through the bolted door, or the closed window-shutter. But the ear admits her intelligence, through the darkest medium, and the minutest cranny.—The eye is upon duty, only in our waking hours; but the ear is always expanded, and always accessible: a courier, which never tires: a centry, ever in his box.—To secure a resource, in case any misfortune should disable one of the hearing or seeing organs, our all-gracious MAKER has given us duplicates of each.

As there are tremulous concussions impressed upon the air, discernable only by the instruments of hearing; there are also *odoriferous* particles, wafted by the same aerial vehicle, which are perceivable only by the smell.—The nostrils are wide at the bottom, that a large quantity of effluvia may enter; narrow at the top, that, when entered, they may close their ranks, and act with greater vigour.—Fine, beyond all imagination, are the streams which exhale from fetid or fragrant bodies. The very best microscopes, which discover thousands and thousands of animalcules in a drop of putrified water, cannot bring one individual, among all these evanescent legions, to our sight. They sail, in numberless squadrons, close to our eyes, close by our ears; yet are so amazingly attenuated, that they elude the search of both. Nevertheless, so judiciously are the *olfactory* nets laid, and so artfully their meshes sized, that they catch these vanishing fugitives. They catch the roaming perfumes, which fly off from the opening honeysuckle; and take in the stationed sweets, which hover round the expanded rose. They imbibe all the balmy fragrance of spring, all the aromatic exhalations of autumn, and enable us to banquet even on the invisible dainties of nature.

Furnished as we are with these several organs,

— Not a breeze

Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes

The setting sun's effulgence. Not a strain

From all the tenant's of the warbling shade
 Ascends, but whence our senses can partake
 Fresh pleasure.*

Another capacity for frequent pleasure, our bountiful CREATOR has bestowed, in granting us the powers of taste. By means of which, the food that supports our body, feasts our palate; first, treats us with a pleasing regale; then, distributes its beneficial recruits.—The hone bedewed with oil, whets the razor into the utmost keenness. The *saliva*, flowing upon the tongue, and moistening its nerves, quickens them into the liveliest acts of sensation.

This sense, is circumstanced, in a manner peculiarly benign and wise; so as to be a standing, though silent plea of temperance. Without recurring to the vengeance of GOD, or the terrors of eternal judgment, it is a powerful dissuasive from irregular and excessive indulgencies. Because, the exercise of sobriety, sets the finest edge on its faculties; and adds the most poignant relish to its enjoyments. Whereas, riot and voluptuousness pall the appetite; blunt its sensibility; and render the gratifications extremely languid, if not perfectly insipid.—The sight, the smell, the taste, are, not only so many separate sources of delight, but a joint security to our health. They are the vigilant and accurate inspectors, which examine our food, and enquire into its properties; whether it be pleasant or disagreeable; wholesome or noxious. For the discharge of this office, they are excellently qualified, and most commodiously situate. So that nothing can gain admission through the mouth, till it has undergone the scrutiny, and obtained the passport of them all.

To all these, as a most necessary and advantageous supplement, is added the sense of *feeling*. Which renders the whole assemblage complete.—While other senses have a particular place of residence; this is diffused throughout the whole body. In the palms of the hands, on the tips of the

fingers, and indeed through the extreme parts of the flesh, it is most quickly and lively : as the advanced guards, or scouts upon the frontiers, are or ought to be peculiarly attentive and wakeful.—Scouts did I say? The whole army of *Xerxes*, drawn out in battle array, with his *millions* of supernumerary attendants*, were but like a few gleaners straggling in the field ; if compared, either in number or order, with those nervous detachments, which pervade the texture of the skin, and minister to the act of feeling—How happily is this sense tempered between the two extremes! Neither so *acute*, as the membranes of the eye : nor so *obtusé*, as the callus of the heel. The former would expose us to continual pain ; render our clothes galling, and the very down oppressivé. The latter would quite benumb the body, and almost annihilate the touch,—Nor this alone, but all the senses are most exactly adapted to their respective offices, and to the several exigencies of our present state. Were they *strained* to a much higher tone, they would be avenues of anguish. Were they relaxed into greater insensibility, they would be so many useless incumbrances.

Say, what the use, were finer senses given,
 T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
 The touch if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at every pore?
 Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
 Dir of a rose in aromatic pain? †

Asp. How admirable and gracious is this provision, which the blessed GOD has made, to accomodate us with delightful sensations, and instructive ideas!—The taste, the touch

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* The soldiers and attendants of *Xerxes*, amounted to five millions two hundred and eighty thousand. Another army, so large and numerous, occurs not in all the records of history.

Vid. *HEROD LIB. VII.*

† *Eth. Epist. I.*

and the smell, are somewhat straitened in the extent of their operations. The ear carries on a correspondence with a *larger* circle of objects. But the sight most amply supplies, whatever is wanting in all the other senses. The sight spreads itself to an *infinite* multitude of bodies; and brings within our notice some of the *remotest* parts of the universe.—The taste, the touch, the smell perceive nothing but what is brought to their very doors. Whereas, the eye extends its observation, as far as the orbit of *Saturn*; nay glances, and in an instant of time, to the inconceivable distance of the stars. The compass of the earth, together with the immensity of the skies, are its unlimited range.

From this remarkable variety, with regard to the *sphere* and *activity*, the acuteness and vivacity of the senses, St. *Paul* forms one of the finest, boldest, and most important comparisons in the world. By this he illustrates the difference between the wisdom, which is derived from the word of divine revelation; and the wisdom, which is acquired by dint of human application.—In his oration to the *Athenians*, speaking of their most celebrated sages, he says; *If so be, they might feel after, and find HIM**. In his epistle to the *Hebrews*, speaking of the man *Moses*, our author observes; that *he endured as seeing him who is invisible*† writing to his *Corinthian* converts, he adds, as a farther heightening to the contrast; *We all beholding with open face the glory of the LORD*‡. The knowledge of the *Philosopher*, is like that obscure, and scanty information, which is but difficultly obtained by groping with the hand, in the gloom of a dark night. The knowledge of a *christian*, is like that copious influx of clear and enlarged ideas, which we receive by the mediation of the eye, amidst the shining of a bright day.

Tully, we find, has in the book before us, hit upon some of the most general and obvious uses, to which the several parts of the human body are adapted. Yet how *superficial* and *deficient* appears his penetration, when we take in the much deeper discoveries, and the much higher improve

ments of our moral duties and divine doctrines; when compared with what is taught us, in the *plain* sermon on the Mount, and the unstudied Epistles of the *Jewish* tent-maker.

Therefore, though I would bless the beneficent GOD, for the ministration of all the senses, and particularly for the noble organs of vision: I would be more especially thankful for that light of the world, CHRIST JESUS and his glorious gospel; as well as for that *spiritual eye*, by which the one is understood, and the other seen—a *lively faith*. I would also long for that place of beatific enjoyment, where our views of the adorable GODHEAD, and our acquaintance with the sublimest truths, will as much transcend all our present apprehensions, as the most enlightened saint exceeds the benighted gentile.

Ther. The crowning gift, that which improves—but why am I so prolix? Why should I resume a subject, already spun out to a degree of tediousness? Why weary my Aspasio, and put his attention to penance?

Asp. Dear Theron, why do you talk in this manner? How can you admit such a suspicion? How can you offer to drop your narrative, just at this interesting point? Weary! no; I am almost inclined to speak, what perhaps your modesty will dislike to hear speak—

Ther. Enough. Forbear. I proceed—That which improves the satisfaction, and augments the beneficial effects, accruing from all the senses, is *speech*.—Speech makes me a gainer, from the eyes and ears of other people; from the ideas they conceive, and the observations they make. What an admirable instrument, for articulating the voice, and modifying it into speech, is the *tongue*!—The tongue has neither bone nor joint; yet fashions itself, with the utmost volubility, into every shape and every posture, which can express sentiment, or constitute harmony. This little collection of muscular fibres, under the conducting skill of the CREATOR, is the artificer of our words. By this we communicate the *secrets* of the breast, and make our very *thoughts* audible. By this we instruct the ignorant, and comfort the distressed; we glorify GOD, and edify

each other ;* the academic explains the abstrusest sciences, and the ecclesiastic preaches the everlasting gospel.

Who would not bless, for this, the gift of speech?

And in the tongue's beneficence be rich?

This is likewise the efficient of music. It is soft as the lyre, or shrill as the trumpet ; it can warble as the lute, or resound like the organ. Connecting the sweetness of its melody, with the solemnities of devotion, we tune the spiritual song, and raise the sacred anthem. We sooth the cares, and beguile the toils of life : we imitate the angelic choirs, and anticipate, in some degree, their celestial joys. As the tongue requires full scope, and an easy play, it is lodged in an ample cavity, and surrounded with reservoirs of spirit, always ready to distil the lubricating dews. It moves under a concave roof, which serves as a *sounding-board* to the voice ; giving it much the same additional vigour and grace, as the shell of a violin adds to the language of the strings.

Wise—wonderfully wise, and eminently gracious, is the regulation both of *spontaneous* and *involuntary* motion. Was this regulation reversed, what deplorable inconveniencies would take place ; nay, what unavoidable ruin must ensue ! —Deplorable inconveniencies ; if the discharges of the bowels, or evacuations of the bladder, was quite independent on our leave. Unavoidable ruin ; if the action of the heart, required the co-operation of our thoughts ; or the business of respiration, waited for the concurrence of our will.

The will, in some sases, has not so much as a single vote. In others, she determines and commands, like an absolute sovereign ; nor is there a monarch upon earth, so punctually obeyed, as this queen of the human system. If she but intimate her pleasure, the spirits run, they fly, to execute her orders ; to stretch the arm, or close the hand ; to furrow the brow with frowns, or dimple the cheek with

* The articulating tongue is called our glory. Psal. lviii. B.

smiles.—How easily, as well as punctually, are these orders carried into execution! To turn the screw, or work the lever, is laborious and wearisome. But we move the vertebræ, with all their appendent chambers; we advance the leg, with the whole incumbent body; we rise from our seat; we spring from the ground; and, though much force is exerted, though a very considerable weight is raised, we meet with no difficulty, we complain of no fatigue.

That all this should be effected, without any toil, and by a bare act of the will, is very surprising. But that the various motions should be made, renewed, continued, even while we remain entirely ignorant of the manner, in which they are performed, this is still more astonishing. Who can play so much as a single tune upon the spinnet, without learning the difference of the keys, or studying the rudiments of music? Impossible! Yet the mind of man touches every spring of the human machine, with the most masterly skill; though she knows nothing at all, concerning the nature of her implements, or the process of her operations.—We walk, we run, we leap; we throw ourselves into a variety of postures, and go through a multitude of exercises; yet are utterly unable to say, which nerve should be active; which muscle should swell; or which tendon approximate, in order to produce any one of these effects.

Put a german flute into the hand even of a sensible person: without a master to instruct him, he is at a loss to make the instrument speak: much less is he able to click and soften the sound, to exalt and extend the note as he pleases.—Yet we are self-taught in the method of forming, regulating, and varying the voice. Naturally, and with unpremeditated fluency, we give it the languishing cadence of sorrow, or the sprightly airs of joy, the low faltering accents of fear, or the elevated tone and rapid sallies of anger.

The eye of a rustic who has no notion of optics, or any of its laws, shall lengthen and shorten its axis; dilate and contract its pupil, without the least hesitation, and with the utmost propriety; adapting itself, even with mathematical exactness, to the particular distance of objects and

the different degrees of light. By which means, it performs some of the most curious experiments in the improved *Newtonian* philosophy, without the least knowledge of the science, or so much as any consciousness of its own dexterity.

I can never sufficiently admire this multiplicity of animated organs; their finished form; their faultless order; and the exquisite regulation of all their movements. Yet I must confess myself struck with greater admiration at the power, the truly mysterious power and sway, which the soul exercises over the whole. Ten thousand reins are put into her hand. She is not acquainted with their office, their use, or their name. She has not learnt so much as to distinguish one from another. Nevertheless, she manages all, conducts all, without the least perplexity or the least irregularity; nay, with a promptitude, a consistency, and a speed, which nothing else can equal!

Asp. Wonderfully, I perceive, and fearfully are we made!—Made of such complicated parts; each so correctly fashioned, and all so exactly arranged;† every one executing such curious functions, and many of them operating in so mysterious a manner; as may justly render us a wonder to ourselves.—Since health depends upon so many minute requisites; upon such a numerous assemblage of moving organs, since a single secretion stopped, may destroy the salutary temperature of the fluids, or a single wheel clogged, may put an end to the vital motion of the solids; with what holy fear, should we pass the time of our sojourning here below!‡ Trusting, for continual preservation, not merely on our own care; not merely on alimentary recruits; but on that omnipotent hand, which formed the admirable machine. That the same hand, which prepared the pulleys, and hung on the weights, may

* Psal. cxxxix. 14.

† St. Paul's language on the subject is exceedingly beautiful and expressive. Eph. iv. 16.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 17.

daily wind up the wheels. May never cease to superintend their agency, and support our being.

When we consider the extensive contrivance, and delicate mechanism—what plans of geometry,* have been laid; what operations of chemistry, are performed; in a word, what miracles of art and elegance are executed; in order to furnish us with the necessary recruits, and the several delights of life—is there not abundant reason to cry out, with the same inspired writer; “*How dear are thy counsels unto me, O GOD!* Thy counsels of creating wisdom! Thou hast not been sparing, but even lavish of thy artificial and elaborate designs. Thou hast omitted no expedient, which might establish my ease; enlarge my comfort; and promote, yea complete my bodily happiness!” And is not this a most endearing obligation, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to GOD?

Should we not, every one, acknowledge with David? *Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me*—pray with David? *O give me spiritual understanding* and godly zeal—and resolve with David? *that I may learn and keep thy commandments?*† “What thou, LORD, hast, with so much curiosity contrived, with so much accuracy framed, and with so much liberality adorned, I would fain devote to thy glory. Never, O! never let me debase to the drudgery of satan, nor prostitute to the slavery of my lusts, those members and those faculties, on which thou hast bestowed so much divine cost and heavenly skill. Let them all be servants of righteousness, and instruments of holiness. Let them all be *vessels of honor*, sanctified and ‡ meet for their indulgent CREATOR’s service. That I may glorify the great AUTHOR of existence, *with my body and with my spirit, which are*, as “to workmanship, property, and redemption, wholly *his.*”

* In the muscles alone, says Mr. RAY, there seems to be more geometry, than in all the artificial engines in the world.

† Psal. cxix. 73.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 21.

Ther. *With my spirit*—Ay; what is this mansion of flesh, though so exquisitely wrought, compared with that sublime and immortal inhabitant, which resides within?

—That intellectual Being;

Those thoughts, which wander through eternity! *

This consideration inclines me to think, that, if the *cashet* be so highly polished, the *jewel* cannot be so excessively coarse, as my Aspasio's doctrine of original corruption supposes.

Asp. I perceive your aim, Theron. But must beg leave at present, to decline all overtures for a dispute. If my arguments have failed, your description has answered its end.—I cannot suffer my thoughts to be diverted from a subject which is so very engaging, yet so rarely discussed. I have such a strong desire to recollect and retain what has been observed, that even *your* conversation will, at this juncture, lose its relish. Here therefore I put a period to our discourse, and must break away from your company, in order to ruminate and digest my notions, in some sequestered lonely walk. Unless you will permit me, before I retire, to make one remark.—And let it not startle my friend, if I venture to say, that, amidst all his curious observations, he has forgot the principal circumstance of *honor* and *excellence*, which dignifies the human body.

Ther. I have omitted many fine and admirable properties, I confess. But sure I have not forgot the *principal* and most distinguishing.

Asp. You need not be displeased with yourself. It argues no defect in your dissertation. The circumstance I have in my view, could never be discovered, by following the dissecting knife. It is learnt, not from *Cheselden's* draughts, or the tables of *Albinus*; but from the word of revelation. What I mean, is this—The human body was exalted to a most intimate and *personal union*, with the eternal SON of GOD. He who decorated the heaven with

stars, and crowned the stars with lustre; *HE vouchsafed to be made flesh,* and was found in fashion as a man.†*—Nay, this is, even now, the apparel of that majestic and adorable PERSON. He is clothed with our nature; he wears our very limbs; and appears in the dress of humanity, even at the right-hand of GOD, and at the head of all the heavenly hosts.

What think you of another privilege, mentioned by the apostle? *Your bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST.*‡ Not your souls only, but your very bodies, are the shrine, in which the *High and Holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity*, condescends to dwell. HE, who sitteth between the cherubim, and walketh in the circuit of the skies, is pleased to sanctify these earthly tenements, and to choose them for his own habitation. Is not this a much grander embellishment, than all their matchless contrivance and masterly workmanship? Just as the rod which budded, and the manna, which was miraculously preserved; the sacred oracle of Urim and Thummim; with the cloud of glory covering the mercy-seat; were a much more eminent distinction of Solomon's temple, than the most heightened beauties of architecture.

Nor must I omit the dignity—the transcendent and amazing dignity—which is reserved for these systems of flesh, at the resurrection of the just. They will then be refined and improved, into the most perfect state, and the most beauteous form. Surpassing whatever is resplendent and amiable in the most ornamental appearances of material nature. They will be purer than the unspotted firmament; brighter than the most brilliant stars; and which exceeds all parallel, which comprehends all perfection, they will be *made like unto CHRIST's glorious body.*§ Like that incomparably glorious body, which the blessed JESUS

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* John i. 14.

† Phil. ii. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

§ Phil. iii. 21.

wears, in his celestial kingdom, and on his triumphant throne.*

When we add all these magnificent prerogatives, which are revealed in scripture, to all those inimitable niceties, which are displayed by anatomists, what thankfulness, what admiration, can equal such a profusion of favors?

When all thy mercies, O my GOD,

My ailing soul surveys,

Transported with the view I'm lost

In wonder, love, and praise!

* This is a circumstance, rather inexpressibly marvellous. Let the Christian, who, like the writer of this note, languishes under a sickly constitution, think upon it with peculiar attention, and with peculiar pleasure.—The body of CHRIST is, if I mistake not, the noblest and most finished part of the material creation.—To have formed it in the womb of the virgin, is, perhaps, the strongest proof of the omnipotence and omniscience of the blessed SPIRIT.—This body stands, as the first-born in the family of GOD, possessing the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.—In the Mount of Transfiguration it “shone like the sun.” To Saul, in his journey towards Damascus, it shone, “above the brightness of the sun.” And who can tell how illustriously it will shine; when the Man CHRIST JESUS comes in the clouds of heaven, and takes his seat on the great tribunal?—But this we can tell, of this we are sure, that these bodies of men, though now enfeebled by sickness, polluted by sin, and soon to be degraded in the dust, that these very bodies will, at our REDEEMER’S appearing, be exalted to the same state of purity and perfection, the same life of immortality and glory with his own.—Be as he be GOD for this delightful hope! No restorative so efficacious. No cordial so



DIALOGUE XIII.

THE morning had been wet. At noon the ceased. But the heavens still continued gloomy.—Towards evening, a gentle eastern gale sprung up; which dissipated the dead calm, and cleared the face of the sky.—The sun, which had been muffled in clouds, dropped the veil. Disengaged from the dusky shroud, he shone forth with peculiar splendor. His beams, endeared by their late suspension, were doubly welcome, and produced unusual gaiety.

At this juncture Theron and Aspasio walked abroad.—They walked alternately on the terraces; one of which was opposite to the country, the other contiguous to the parterre.—Where the gales, impregnated with the *freshest* exhalations of nature, breathed the smell of meads, and fields, and groves.—Or else, shaking the clusters of roses, and sweeping the beds of fragrance, they flung ~~them~~ and odours through the air.

At a distance, were heard the bleatings of the flock, mingled with the lowings of the milky mothers. While more melodious music warbled from the neighbouring boughs, and spoke aloud the joy of their feathered inhabitants.—And not only spoke their joy, but spread an *additional* charm over all the landscape. For, amidst such strains of native harmony, the breathing perfumes smell more sweet; the streaming rills shine more clear; and the universal prospect looks more gay.

Then was experienced, what *Milton* so delicately describes,

As when, from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heav'n's cheerful face, the lowering element
Scowls o'er the darken'd landscape snow or show'r:
It change the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

With wonder and delight our friends observed, both the exquisite beauty, and the immense magnificence of things. — They were struck with the most profound veneration of that Almighty MAJESTY; who hung the sun in vaults of azure, and clothed his orb with robes of lustre. Whose *right-hand spanneth the heavens,* and stretcheth them out as a tent*, for innumerable creatures, worlds, systems to dwell in† — Charmed they were, at the consideration of the CREATOR's boundless beneficence. Who lifts up the light of his countenance, and joy is shed; who opens his munificent hand, and plenty is poured, throughout all the regions of the universe. Insomuch, that even inanimate beings seem to smile under a sense of the blessings: and though they find not a tongue to praise, yet speak their acclamations by their gladdened looks.

Ther. How very different, *Aspasio*, is this delightful Appearance of things, from your ill-favored doctrine of original guilt, and original depravity! Your doctrine is a contradiction to the language of nature. Nature says, through all her works, "That God is good, and men are made to "be happy." Whereas, your opinion would turn the whole world into a vast hospital, and make every individual person a leper or a lazarus.

Asp. I join with my *Theron*, and with universal nature, in bearing witness to the goodness of our God. And no-

thing, I am persuaded, displays it more, nothing manifests it so much, as the doctrine of our fall in Adam, connected with our recovery in Christ. Only in one particular I am obliged to dissent. It is not my opinion that *would make*, but the sin of our forefather which *has made*, the whole world an infirmary, and every individual person a leper.

Ther. At this rate, you would crowd into that single act of disobedience, evils more numerous, and more fatal, than the plagues which were lodged in Pandora's box, or the troops which were stowed in the Trojan horse.

Asp. Far more numerous, and infinitely more pernicious.—The fable of Pandora's box seems to have been a shred of the doctrine, picked up by the Heathen wits, and fashioned according to their sportive fancy. This would, if there was any occasion for such weak assistance, bring in the Pagan theology, as a subsidiary evidence to our cause.—The Trojan horse poured ruin upon a single city; but the primitive transgression entailed misery upon all generations.

Ther. You have advanced this heavy charge pretty strenuously, I must confess. But without descending to facts, or appealing to experience. All the invectives are general and declamatory, none pointed and particular.

Asp. It is easy, my dear friend, too easy to draw up a particular bill of indictment; and not only to specify the facts, but to demonstrate the charge. Experience, sad experience will furnish us with a cloud of witnesses, and prove my remonstrances to be more than invectives.

Were we to dissect human nature, as, in our last conference, you treated the animal system, we should find the leprosy of corruption, spreading itself through our whole frame. For which reason, it is styled, by an inspired writer, "The old man*."—*Old*; because, in its commencement, it was early as the fall; and, in its communication to individuals, is coeval with their being.—*man*; because it has tainted the body, infected the soul, and disordered the whole person.

St. Paul, describing a profligate conversation, speaks in this remarkable manner; *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind**. By the desires of the flesh, he means those irregular inclinations, which correspond with the animal part of our constitution. By the desires of the mind he denotes those evil propensities, which are more immediately seated in the intellectual faculties. And by both, he very strongly expresses the total depravation of our nature.

Ther. What you call evil propensities, I am apt to think, are not really sinful, but appointed for the trial of our virtue.—Nay, since they are confessedly natural, they cannot be in themselves evil. Because, upon this supposition, God, who is the author of our nature, would be the author also of our sin.

Asp. Then you imagine, that propensities to evil, are void of guilt. This is the popish notion, but neither the Mosaic nor the apostolic doctrine.—In the law of Moses it is written, *Thou shalt not covet*†. The divine Legislator prohibits, not only the iniquitous practice, but the evil desire.—The apostle gives it in charge to the Colossians, *Mortify your members, which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and, which is the source of all, evil concupiscence*‡. Now, must not that be sinful, which is contrary to God's holy nature, and a transgression of his holy law? Can that be free from guilt, which we are commanded to mortify? Which, if not mortified, denominates us children of disobedience, and subjects us to the wrath || of God?

Though these propensities are confessedly natural, they may be evil notwithstanding. The sacred writers represent what is natural, as contrary to what is spiritual. Instead of commending it, as innocent; they condemn it, as *foolish, base*¶, and *criminal***.—Neither does this make the author of our nature, the author of our sin. But it proves, that

* Eph. ii. 3. † Lev. xix. 17. ‡ Col. iii. 5.

¶ 1. Cor. xiii. 11. ** Gal. v. 19.

our nature has sustained a destructive blast; that it is quite different from its original state: that, what is spoken of the Israelitish people, is applicable to the human race; *I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine?*

However, let us observe your proposal: dwell no longer on general hints, but descend to a particular examination. As our examination will chiefly respect the soul, let me enquire, what are her principal faculties?

Ther. The *understanding*, the *will*, and the *affections*. These are the most distinguishing powers, which that queen of the human œconomy retains in her service. These, like the several distributions of some ample river, run through the whole man; to quicken, fertilize, and enrich all his conversation.—But you represent them bitter, as the waters of Marah; unwholesome as the streams of Jericho; noxious, as the pottage prepared for the sons of the prophets.

Asp. Nor is this a misrepresentation. For, such they really are; till divine grace, like *Moses's* wood†, like *Elisha's* salt‡, or the meal§ cast in by that holy man of God, sweeten them, heal them, and render their operations salutary.

The understanding claims our first regard.—This, however qualified to serve the purposes of civil life, is unable to discover the truths, in which wisdom consists; or to form the tempers, from which happiness flows.

Let us take our specimen, not from the uncultivated savages of Afric, but from the politest nation in Europe. The Grecians piqued themselves on their intellectual accomplishments. They termed all the rest of mankind Barbarians. Yet, even these sons of science, *professing themselves wise, were, in fact, egregious fools*§.—Not to enumerate the shocking immoralities, which the poets ascribed to their deities. Not to insist upon the gross idolatry.

† Jer. ii. 21. ‡ Exod. xv. 25.

§ 2 Kings ii. 21, 23.

¶ 2 Kings iv. 41.

§ Rom. ii. 23.

tries, which the common people practised in their worship. Even their philosophers, the most improved and penetrating geniuses, were unacquainted with the *very first principle* * of true religion. Even they could not pronounce, with an unflinching tongue, "That **GOD** is **ONE**."

Ther. With regard to the philosophers, the prejudices of a wrong education, might pervert their judgment; or, in compliance with the prevailing mode, they might adopt customs, and assent to notions, which they did not thoroughly approve.

Asp. A poor compliment this to their integrity! Had I been their advocate, methinks, I would have given up the sagacity of my clients, rather than their fidelity to the cause of **GOD** and of truth.

With reference to the *supreme GOOD*, they were equally at a loss.—There's not one among all the inferior creatures; not even the crawling worm, or the buzzing fly; but perceives what is beneficial, and pursues it; discerns what is pernicious, and avoids it. Yonder caterpillar, whose nourishment is from one particular species of vegetables, never makes a wrong application to another: never is allured by the fragrance of the auricula, or dazzled by the splendor of the tulip; but constantly distinguishes, and as constantly adheres to the leaf, which affords her the proper food. So sagacious are the meanest animals, with relation to their respective happiness! while the most celebrated of the Heathen sages were, on a subject of the very same import, mere dotards.—*Varro* reckons up no less than two hundred and eighty-eight different opinions, concerning the true good; and not one of them derives it from the true source. I mean a conformity to the ever-blessed **GOD**, and an enjoyment of his infinite perfections.

If, on these *leading* points, they were so erroneous; no wonder, that they were bewildered in their other researches.

* The first of all the commandments is, *Hear, O Israel, the LORD our GOD is one LORD; and Thou shalt love the LORD, &c.* Mark xii. 29. From which it appears, that the Unity of the **GODHEAD**, is the foundation of all the divine commandments, and of all human worship. That it is impossible to give the **LORD** the honor due unto his name, unless we regard Him as the possessor of all perfection; to whom no being is equal, or second, or in any degree comparable.

No wonder, that being thus *foolish*, they were also *disobedient*; that, *having lost* * *their way* to happiness, they took every deceiver for a guide, and served *divers lusts and pleasures*.

Ther. We are not enquiring into the circumstances of this or that particular nation; but into the state of mankind in general.

Asp. Cast your eye, Theron, upon those swallows. They shoot themselves, with surprising rapidity, through the air. I should take them for so many living arrows, were it not for their shifting, winding, wanton motions.—Are not these what you call *birds of passage*?

Ther. These, and some other of the feathered race, are our constant visitants in summer; but leave us, at the approach of winter. As soon as the weather becomes cold, they assemble themselves in a body; and concert measures, for their departure. *Who* convenes the assembly—*What* debates arise—*Or how* do they communicate the resolution taken—I do not presume to say. This is certain, that not one of them dislodges, till the affair is settled, and the proclamation has been published. Not a single loiterer is to be seen, when the troops are preparing for their decampment; not a single straggler to be found, when they have once begun their march. Having finished their journey through the land, their wings become a sort of sails †; and they launch, though not into, yet over the ocean. Without any compass, to regulate their course; or any *chart*, to make observations in their voyage; they arrive safely at the desired shore. And what is still more extraordinary, they always find the readiest way, and the shortest cut.

Asp. *The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times: and the turtle and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming: but my people know not the judgement of their GOD †.* The young ones of those birds perceive,

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* Remigio Alarum. Virg.

† Jer. viii. 7. † Tit. iii. 8.

how absolutely necessary it is, to forsake the land of their nativity, and travel in quest of milder climes.—But our offspring, even when their minds begin to open, are *brutish in their knowledge* *. Born they are, and too long continue *like the wild ass's colt* †. Not only quite destitute of heavenly wisdom, but stupid to apprehend it, and averse to receive it. *As soon as they are born, they go astray*, and—

Ther. Go astray—To what is this owing, but to the bad examples they behold? They catch the wayward habit, from the irregular conversation of others.

Asp. Is not this a confirmation of my point? Why are they not yielding clay ‡ to each bad impression?—Case hardened steel to every edifying application? To do mischief, to be proud of their apparel, to seek revenge || they are not teachable only, but self-taught. Whereas, if you would affect them with a sense of divine things, or bring them acquainted with GOD their maker; *Line must be upon line, line upon line: precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept: here a little, and there a little.* §—What farther corroborates my sentiment, is, that all these tender toils of erudition are generally unwelcome; are too often

* Jer. x. 14.

† Job x. 12. How keenly is this comparison pointed!—Like the *ass's* an animal remarkable for its stupidity, even to a proverb.—Like the *ass's colt*, which must be still more egregiously stupid than the *dam*—Like the *wild ass's colt*, which is not only blockish, but stubborn and untractable; neither possesses valuable qualities by nature, nor will easily receive them by discipline—The image, in the original, is yet more strongly touched. The comparative particle *like* is not in the *Hebrew*; *even a wild ass's colt*; or, as we should say in *English*, *a mere wild*, &c.

‡ *Circus in vitium flecti.*

|| This is evident, from the success of a method, frequently but injudiciously used to quiet children. The method I mean, of *eating* the thing, which has raised their indignation.

§ A great critic has laid down the following rule, to be observed in fine writing;

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,

The sound must be an echo to the sense

POPE'S *Essay on Criticism*.

Never was this delicate maxim more nicely exemplified, than in the above-cited passage of Isaiah, chap. xxviii. 13.

- unsuccessful; nay, will always be ineffectual, without the concurrence of *Almighty grace*.

Besides, Theron, if this propensity to evil be observable in all children, it seems more than probable, that the unhappy bias is derived from their parents, rather than caught from their neighbours; and owing, not to the influence of external examples, but to a principle of internal corruption.*—Neglect the education of children, and you are sure to have their manners evil, their lives unprofitable. Nay, only remit your endeavours, and they lose what has been gained: they start aside, like a broken bow. And wherefore this? Why do they not, without the rules of discipline or lessons of instruction, spontaneously addict themselves to the exercise of every virtue? Just as the cygnets, in yonder canal, spontaneously take to the element of water, and the act of swimming.

That bed, in the garden before us, will suggest the reason. It has been tilled and dressed this very day. It now lies smooth and clean. Not a single weed appears on its surface. Yet, how certainly will it, in a very little time, produce a plenteous growth of those vegetable nuisances?—Whence can this proceed? No hand will sow them. No wish will invite them. But the seeds, though unperceived by any eyes, are already there. Disseminated by the winds, they have mixed themselves with the mold, and are sunk into the soil.—So, just so, it is with our children. The seeds of iniquity are within† them; and unless proper diligence be exerted by us, unless gracious assistance be vouchsafed from above, they will assuredly spring up; over-run their souls; and dishonor their lives.

Ther. Let us leave the children, and make *men* the subject of our enquiry.

* St. Paul confesses, that he and his fellow-servants were, in their unconverted state, depraved: and this, not by *custom* or *habit*, but by *nature*. Eph. ii. 3.

† Whoever chooses to examine the seeds, the poisonous seeds, which are lodged in this nursery of all evil, may see a sample of them in our LORD's description, *Mark* vii. 20, 21, 22, 23. Where he characterizes the heart, not barely of the hypocritical pharisee, or the abandoned publican, but of mankind in general.

Asp. In this respect, Theron,

Men are but children of a larger growth.

We may leave the vest or hanging-sleeve coat, but we shall still find the follies of the child.—In *youth* what low ambition, and fondness for despicable pleasures.—In *manhood*, what a keen pursuit of transitory wealth; yet what a cold inattention to GOD and holiness!—Men, and men too of enlarged understanding, whose penetration on other subjects, is piercing as the eagle's sight, are, on the most important points, *blind* as the incaverned mole?

Ther. What! is the understanding like the most *dim-sighted* animal, when lodged in her darkest retirement? That sublime faculty of the soul; which lends her eye to all the rest; sits at the helm, and directs their motions?

Asp. You remember, I presume, that beautiful passage in *Milton*;^{*} which Mr. *Addison* so highly admires, and so judiciously illustrates. The passage I mean, where the archangel *Michael* comes down, to advertise *Adam* of future events, and to execute the sentence of divine Justice.

Ther. I remember it perfectly well.—In the East, the great light of day lies under an eclipse. In the West, a bright cloud descends, more luminous than the sun itself. The whole theatre of nature is darkened, that this glorious machine may appear in all its magnificence and beauty.—From this radiant meteor, the *potentate* of heaven alights; and advances, with a majestic stateliness, to meet *Adam*.

Asp. Should you see such an august personage, alighting from his splendid chariot, and walking amidst the thronged streets of a city?—Should you behold every one intent upon his business or diversions; struck with no *awe*; paying no *reverential* regard to this celestial visitant; what would you think?

Ther. I should certainly suspect, that some superior power had drawn a *veil* over their sight, and hid this wonderful spectacle from their view.

^{*} Book XI. 203, &c.

Asp. Such is really the case with all mankind by nature, and with the generality of people, during their whole life. —GOD, the infinitely great GOD, is in every place. Yet how few *advert* to his presence! —All nature exhibits him to their senses; yet, perhaps, he is not in any of their thoughts.

The sun, clothed in transcendent brightness, most illustriously displays his MAKER's glory. The moon, though drest in fainter beams, has lustre enough to shew us the adorable DEITY, and his marvellous perfections. The stars, fixed as they are at an unmeasurable distance, and *lessened* almost to a point, come in with their evidence, and *magnify* their CREATOR to a gazing but unsatisfied world.

The air *whispers* his clemency in the gentle, the refreshing gales of spring. If we take no notice of this soft persuasive address, the tone is elevated; the majesty of JEHOVAH *sounds aloud*, in roaring winds, and rending storms. Yet both expedients fail. Man is like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ears. He refuseth to hear the voice of the charmers, charm they never so sweetly, never so forcibly.

Each flower, arrayed in beauty, and breathing perfume, courts our affections for its infinitely amiable AURHOR. —Not a bird that sings among the branches, nor a brook that murmurs over the pebbles, but invites our praise, or chides our ingratitude. —All the classes of fruits deposit their attestation on our palates, yet seldom reach our hearts. They give us a proof of the divine benignity; a proof, as *undeniable* as it is pleasing, and too often as *ineffectual* also.

In short, the whole creation is a kind of magnificent embassy from its Almighty LORD; deputed to proclaim his excellencies, and demand our homage. Yet, who has not disregarded the former, and withheld the latter? —How few walk, as seeing HIM that is invisible, or have fellowship with the FATHER of spirits? Though, to walk before him, is our *highest* dignity; and to have fellowship with him, is our *only* felicity?

Ther. This is owing to *inattention*, rather than to any blindness or defect in man's understanding. The many

works of genius, which have been produced in various ages, are an abundant proof of his intellectual capacity.—Have not the seas been traversed, and the skies measured? Has not the earth been disemboweled of its choicest treasures; while its surface is beautified with towns, cities, palaces, innumerable?—What fine arts are invented and exercised; and to what a pitch of perfection are they carried? Arts that seem, if not to exceed, at least to rival nature.—It was the understanding, which formed all these great designs. It was the understanding, which contrived the means, and conducted the execution.—And are not these unquestionable evidences of her very superior abilities?

Asp. Then she is like some great empress, who conquers half the world, but is unable to rule *herself*. Who extends her regulations into foreign climes, while her domestic affairs are involved in confusion.—Do you doubt the reality of this remark? Set yourself to meditate upon the most interesting truths. How desultory, how incoherent are your thoughts?—Charge them to be collected. They disobey your orders.—Rally the undisciplined vagrants. Again they desert the task.—Exert all your power, and keep them close to their business. Still they elude your endeavours.

The other day, I could not forbear smiling at a little adventure of your youngest son's. Some quicksilver, which happened to be spilt upon the floor, parted into several globules. The shining balls looked so prettily, he longed to make them his own. But when he offered to take them up, they slipped from his hand. As often as he renewed the attempt, so often he met with a disappointment. The closer he strove to grasp them, the more speedily they escaped from his fingers. He seemed, at first, to be amazed; then became quite angry, that the little fugitives should so constantly baffle his repeated efforts.—Thus unmanageable I very often find my own thoughts. If yours are under no better regimen, this may convince us both, that all is not according to the original creation.

We apply ourselves to converse with the everlasting God in *Prayer*. Here, one would expect to have the thoughts all clearness, and all composure. But here *We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves*. All

those holy ideas, which create reverence, or strengthen faith, or quicken love, come from the FATHER of lights. Should HE withdraw his influence, all will be dull, and dark, and dead. It may be, we are somewhat enlivened in this sacred exercise; before we are aware, perhaps in the very midst of the solemn office, our attention is *dissipated*; and not dissipated only, but *scattered* to the ends of the earth. The GOD of all glory is forsaken, and the devotion paid to some senseless foppery. A malefactor, begging his life at the knees of his sovereign; and discontinuing his suit, in order to ~~catch~~ *a lap-dog*, or pursue a *butterfly*; is but a faint image of the vanity which attends our devotional services.—Reason, which ought to correct these irregularities, is treated like the incredulous lord; who, instead of controuling the unruly multitude, was overborne by their impetuosity, and trodden under foot.*

Since then the reins are struck out of our hands, and we have lost the rule over our own faculties; surely, we are in a state different, very different from our primitive constitution.

Ther. However insensible to refined speculation, the understanding, when interest is in the case, is apprehensive enough.

Asp. In temporal †, not in spiritual affairs.—Your younger brother, Theron, is a merchant. We will suppose him at the sea-side; within a small distance of the vessel, on which a considerable part of his Substance was embarked. We will suppose the vessel in the utmost distress; ready to founder with her leaks, or to strike upon the rocks.—If he discovers no sign of concern; calls in no assistance from the country, makes no effort to *save* the crew, and *secure* the cargo; would you not think him bereaved of his understanding, or deprived of his sight? Could you conceive a more favorable opinion of his eyes or his intellect? If, instead of trying every method to prevent a shipwreck, he

* 2 Kings, vii. 17.

† Called therefore by the apostle, *fleshy wisdom*, and opposed to the grace of GOD. 2 Cor. i. 12.

should amuse himself with picking *shells* from the ocean, or drawing *figures* on the sand?

We, and every one of our fellow-creatures, have an interest in jeopardy, unspeakably more precious, than all the rich lading of a thousand fleets. Our souls, our immortal souls, are exposed, every day, every hour, to the peril of *everlasting destruction*. Every temptation is threatening to their endless welfare, as a ridge of craggy rocks to a ship that drives before the strongest gale.—Yet, how unconcerned are mankind? Where is their holy fear? Where their godly jealousy? Where their wakeful circumspection? Rather, what a gay insensibility is observable in their behaviour? Or else, what a lifeless formality prevails in their supplications? Their supplications to that Almighty BEING, who alone is able to save and to destroy.—Was not the human understanding both darkened and besotted, we should see our neighbours, we should feel ourselves awakened, into much the same earnest solicitude, as the disciples expressed; when perceiving the waves boisterous, and their bark sinking, they cried; *LORD! save us! we perish!*

But alas! in things of an unseen nature, though of eternal consequence, *interest*, that habitual darling of every heart, loses its engaging influence. Nay; when eternity, all-important eternity is at stake, even *self-preservation* is scarce any longer a governing principle.—What can be more deplorable? And, if we admit not the doctrine of original corruption, what so unaccountable?

Ther. This, I must confess, is true, with regard to the unthinking rabble. To them may be accommodated the remark of Augustus. Who, when he saw some foreign females, carrying apes in their arms instead of infants, said to one of his courtiers; “Have the women of those countries *no children*, that they are so fond of such despicable animals?”—The vulgar are so immersed in secular cares, that one might indeed be tempted to ask; “Have those people *no souls*? that buying and selling, eating and drinking, engross their whole concern?”—But persons of rank and education, think in a more exalted manner.

Asp. Do you then imagine, that an elevation of circumstances sets the affections on things above? Or, that it is the peculiar infelicity of the *vulgar*, to *grovel* in their desires?—Gold, I believe, is more likely to encrease, than to dissipate, the fog on the intellectual faculties. Abundance of possessions, instead of disengaging the heart, fasten it more inseparably to the earth. Even superior attainments in learning, if not sanctified by grace, serve only to render the owner somewhat more refined in his follies, or *vainly to puff up his fleshly mind* *.—But comparisons, between the various classes of mankind, are as useless as they are invidious. None, in either condition, attend to the things which make for their peace, till they are *awakened* from their lethargy, by the quickening SPIRIT of CHRIST. And even then we cannot but observe evident indications of much *remaining* blindness.

How apt are such persons to mistake the way of salvation? To place their own works for a foundation of hope, instead of CHRIST, the rock of ages? Thinking by their own performances to *win*, not seeking from unmerited grace to *receive*, the inheritance of eternal glory. Which is more absurdly vain, than to offer toys as an equivalent for thrones; or to dream of purchasing diadems with a mite.—They are also prone to misapprehend the nature of holiness. Are zealous to regulate the *external* conduct, without attending to the renovation of the *heart*: in outward forms elaborate; with respect to inward sanctity, less if at all exact. A labour just as preposterous, as to skin over the surface of a wound, while it festers at the bottom, and consumes the bone.

Give me leave to ask Theron; when our LORD declares, *Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven* †: when he speaks of *eating his flesh, and drinking his blood* ‡: when you hear or read of union with the blessed JESUS, or communion with the most high GOD: is there not a cloud, if not total darkness, on your

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mind*?—How erroneous was the *Psalmist* himself, in his judgement concerning the divine disposals? *so foolish and ignorant was I, even as it were a beast, or as the veriest beast before thee.*—The voice of experience therefore will attest, what the word of revelation has averred; that *the natural man*, be his intellectual abilities ever so pregnant, or ever so improved, *cannot know the things of the Spirit of GOD†*: He has no sight to discern their beauty; no taste to relish their sweetness. Nay, though they are the purest light, and the most perfect wisdom, to Him they appear, not only dark and obscure, but even *foolishness* itself.

Would this be the case, if the understanding was not greatly depraved? Should it be difficult for your ear to distinguish the diversity of sounds; or for your eye to discern the variety of colours; would you not conclude, that the organs were very much impaired?

Ther. I think, you have treated the understanding, as Zopyrus served his own body,‡ when he went over to the enemy—Do you intend to mangle the other faculties, at the same unmerciful rate?

Asp. That nobleman *made* the wounds, which disfigured his flesh. I have only probed the sores, which were found in the understanding. If I have touched the quick, and put the patient to pain, it is only to facilitate the operation of medicine, and make way for a cure.—But permit me to ask, Whercin does the excellency of the human *will* consist?

Ther. In following the guidance of reason, and submitting to the influence of proper authority.

* * With regard to the mysteries of CHRIST, the greatest proficients are but *obscure acquirers*, dull even in their acuteness.—What says the wise *Agur*? An invaluable fragment of whose works is preserved in the book of Proverbs. *Surely, I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man*—even though the following verses bespeak the very singular elevation and extent of his knowledge. Prov xxx 2.—*Conformably to the experience of this excellent man, I have always observed, that the more enlightened people are, the more they lament their ignorance; the more they pant after a continual progress in heavenly knowledge; the more they pray for clearer, still clearer manifestations of the incomprehensible GOD, and his transcendently rich grace in CHRIST JESUS.*

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

‡ See *Agur's* *Maxims* in Vol. III. p. 46.

Asp. The will, I fear, rejects the government of reason; and it is undeniably certain, that it rebels against the authority of GOD.

Cast your eye upon that *team* of *horses*, with which yonder countryman is ploughing his fallow ground. No less than five of those robust animals are linked together, and yield their submissive necks to the draught. They have more strength than twenty men, yet are managed by a *single lad*. They not only stand in awe of the lash, but listen to the voice of their driver. They turn to the right-hand or to the left; they quicken their pace, or stop short in the furrow; at the bare intimation of his pleasure.—Are *we* equally obedient to the calls, to the exhortations, the express injunctions of our heavenly LORD? The blessed JESUS spoke at the beginning, and the world was made. He speaks by his providence, and the universe is upheld. When He shall speak at the last day, the heavens will pass away, and the earth be dissolved. Yet He speaks to us in his divine word, and we turn a deaf ear to his address. He speaks in tender expostulations, and no melting of heart ensues. He speaks in precious promises, and no ardent desires are enkindled.—The will, which in these cases ought to be turned as wax to the seal, is unimpressed and inflexible as an *iron sinew*.

Ther. The human will is constantly inclined to preserve, accommodate, and make its possessor happy. Is not this the right position, in which it should always stand? Or the most desirable *direction*, that can be given to its motions?

Asp. I should be glad, if fact bore witness to your assertion. But fact, I apprehend, is on the contrary side.—I took notice, as we came along, of some *ants* busily employed on a little hillock. Have you made any observations, Theron, on this reptile community?

Ther. It is a little republic*. They inhabit a kind of oblong city, divided into various streets. They are governed by laws, and regulated by politics, of their own. Their

magazines are commodiously formed, and judiciously guarded against the injuries of the weather. Some are defended by an arch made of earth, and cemented with a peculiar sort of glue. Some are covered with rafters of slender wood, and thatched with rushes or grass. The roof is always raised with a double slope, to turn away the current of the waters, and shoot the rain from their store-houses. They all bestir themselves with incessant assiduity, while the air is serene; while the roads are good; and abundance of loose grain lies scattered over the fields. By these precautions, they live secure, when storms embroil the sky; they want no manner of conveniency, even when winter lays waste the plains.

Asp. Do we improve, so diligently, our present opportunities? This life is the seed-time of eternity. Do we husband the precious moments, like persons sensible of their unspeakable performance? Sensible, that if we trifle and are ignorant, *they* will be irrecoverably gone, and *we* irretrievably ruined.

Sickness, we know not how soon, may invade us, pain may torment us, and both may issue in our final dissolution. Are we duly aware of these awful changes, and properly solicitous to put all in order for their approach?—We walk (alarming thought!) upon the very brink of death, resurrection, and judgement. Do we walk like *wise virgins*, with our loins girt; with our lamps trimmed; in a state of continual readiness, for the heavenly BRIDEGROOM's advent?

Those ants *have no guide, overseer, or ruler. Yet they prepare their meat in the summer, and gather their food in the harvest* *. We have all these, yet neglect the time of our visitation.—We have GOD's unerring word, to guide us; GOD's ever watchful eye, to oversee us; GOD's sovereign command, to rule and quicken us. Notwithstanding all these motives, is not the speech of the sluggard, the very language of our conduct? *A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands*

to sleep. The most supine indifference, where all possible diligence is but just sufficient!—This, you must allow, is the true character of mankind in general. And does this demonstrate the *rectitude* of their will?

Ther. The understanding may be said to carry the torch, the will to hold the balance. Now, the perfection of a balance consists, in being so nicely poised, as to incline at the *least* touch, and preponderate with the slightest weight. This property belongs, without all dispute, to the human will.

Asp. What? if one of your scales should descend to the ground, though charged with trifles, that are light as air? If the other should kick the beam, though its contents be weightier, than the talents of gold?—Is not this an exact representation of our will, when the *fleeting* pleasures of sense, or the *puny* interests of time, excite our wishes; even while the solid delights of religion, and the immensely rich treasures of immortality, can hardly obtain our attention?—However, let us quit the metaphor, and examine fact. Suppose I make it appear, that, instead of choosing the most eligible objects, the will is so deplorably vitiated, as to *lothe* what is salutary, and be *fond* of what is baneful.

Ther. If you prove this to be universally the case, you will prove your favourite point with a witness.

Asp. When Providence is pleased to thwart our measures, or defeat our endeavours; to bring us under the cloud of disgrace, or lay upon us the rod of affliction; what is our behaviour?—Do we bow our heads in *humble* resignation? Do we open our mouths in *thankful* acknowledgments?—Observe the waters in that elegant octangular bason. They assimilate themselves, with the utmost readiness, and with equal exactness, to the vessel which contains them. So would the human will, if it were not extremely froward and foolish, conform itself to the divine: which is unerringly wise, and, of all possible contingencies, incomparably the best.—Yet, how apt are we to fret with inquietude; and struggle under afflictive dispensations *as a wild bull in a net!*

Ther. This is a very imperfect proof, Aspasio, and corresponds with only part of your accusation. We may dis-

like what is wholesome, especially if it be unpalatable, yet not be fond of our bane.

Asp. Should you see a person, who thirsts after the putrid lake, but disrelishes the clear running fountain; who longs for the *impoisoned* berries of the nightshade, but abhors the *delicious* fruit of the orchard, would you applaud the regularity of his appetite?—I don't wait for your answer. But I more than suspect this is a true picture of all unregenerate people. See! how they affect dress and external ornament; but are unwilling, rather than desirous, to be clothed with humility,* and to put on CHRIST!† Amusement will engage, play animate, and diversion fire them: but as to the worship of the living GOD, O! *what a weariness is it!*‡ Frothy novels, and flatulent wit, regale their taste; while the marrow and fatness of the divine word, are “as their sorrowful meat.” Flatter them; and, though your speech is a luscious poison,§ their eyes sparkle with delight. Admonish them; and though your service is an excellent oil,¶ dissatisfaction lours on their brow.—What is all this, but to lothe the salutary, and long for the baneful?

Let me, from the same comparison, propose one question more; which may be applicable both to the will and to the understanding.—Should you hear of another person; the state of whose stomach was so disposed, that it turned the most nourishing food into phlegm; and derived matter of *disease*, from the most sovereign supports of *health*; what would you think of his constitution?

Thier. I should certainly think it very much distempered.

Asp. Without the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, our souls turn every occurrence into an increase of their

* Pet. v. 5.

† Rom. xiii. 14.

‡ Mal. i. 13.

§ Job vi. 7.

¶ Mr. Bonnel, in one of his evening examinations, recollecting that he had heard himself prayed; and being conscious, that he heard it with delight—taking honor to himself, and not giving GOD the glory, Acts xii. 23. Made this memorandum in his diary; “To day, I have been bathing my soul in poison.”

¶ Paal. cxli. 5.

sinful depravity. Our very table is a snare, and instead of exciting us to gratitude, is a provocative to gluttony.—How difficult is it, when we flow in plenty, not to be elated; when we are pressed with poverty, not to repine!—Have we business in the world? it cumbers our thoughts, or tempts us to avarice. Have we no business to manage? we sink into sloth, and settle on the lees of voluptuousness.—If our schemes are prosperous, is it odds but they attach us to the interests of time. If they prove unsuccessful, we too often are chagrined with the disappointment, and sin against meekness. Even the holy commandment, instead of restraining sin, or producing obedience, irritates the inbred depravity; and renders it more restless, more impetuous, more ungovernable*.—Those very *things, which should have been for our welfare* (so malignant and raging is our corruption!) *are converted into an occasion of falling.*

Ther. The will is under no necessity of misemploying her powers. She is free to act in this manner or in that. And, if a spendthrift, is not a slave.

Asp. In actions which relate to the *animal* oeconomy, the will is unquestionably free. She can contract the forehead into a frown, or expand it with a smile.—In the *ordinary* affairs of life, she is under no controul. We can undertake or decline a journey, carry on or discontinue an employ, just as we please.—In the *outward* acts of religion also, the will is her own mistress. We can read the word of GOD, or go to the place of divine worship, without any extraordinary aid from above.—But in matters which are more intimately connected with our salvation, the case is widely different.

What says our famous old poet *Spencer*? Amidst all his rich fancy and bright imagery, he speaks as plainly upon this subject, as *Theron's* serious friend.

Ne'er let the man ascribe it to his skill,

That thorough grace has got the victory.

If any strength we have, it is to ill;

But all the good is GOD's, the power and eke the will.

Ther. This wants confirmation. More authentic confirmation, than the fanciful flights of a poet.

Asp. Would you have a person delight himself in the LORD; take pleasure in devotion; and set his affections on things above?—All this is both his duty and his interest. But alas! his inclinations gravitate the quite contrary way. His will is in the condition of that distressed woman, who was bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, and could in no wise lift up herself.* Corruption, like a strong bias influences, or rather like a heavy mountain oppresses his mind. Neither can he shake off the propensity, or struggle away from the load: until grace, almighty grace, interposes for his release.—Where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there, and there alone, is liberty;† that sacred and glorious liberty, which is not the common privilege of all men, but the high prerogative of the children of GOD.

Would you have a person apply to the great REDEEMER; apply with a real ardor of desire; as *Baelmeus* of old, or the *Sprophœnician* mother? counting all things but dung, for the transcendent excellency of CHRIST?—To do this, is to possess true wisdom; and the only expedient to acquire true happiness. But the human will is like the withered arm; cannot stretch forth itself to the all-gracious SAVIOUR: cannot hunger and thirst after his everlasting righteousness and infinite merit: cannot do this, till the SAVIOUR himself speaks power into the enfeebled, the perverted faculty.—If you think otherwise; try the experiment. Persuade men to this necessary practice. Urge the most weighty arguments: devise the most pathetic expostulations: let zeal exert all her force, and rhetoric employ all her art. Without being a prophet, I dare venture to foretel the issue. Disappointments, repeated disappointments, will convince you—that our divine MASTER knew what he said, when he solemnly declared; *no man can come to me, except the FATHER, which hath sent me, draw him.*‡—That our church has not taught us to play the

* Luke xiii. 11.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

‡ John vi. 44.

hypocrite, when she teaches us to confess, "We be tied and bound with the chain of our sins."

Ther. Are we slaves then? Will *christianity* send us to seek our brethren, in the mines or in the galleys?

Ans. Christianity does not *send*, but *find* us there. There, or in a worse slavery.*—It is doubtless a most abject state, to wear the yoke, and truckle in chains. Yet such, I apprehend, is the state of our minds by nature. To prove this, we need not go down to the lowest ranks of life. *These*, you might say with the prophet, *are poor; these are foolish; they have not known the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their GOD.—I will get me therefore to the great men,*† and examine their disposition.

Have you not known persons of the greatest intrepidity, and firmest resolution, hurried away by their lusts, as "a rolling thing before the whirlwind?"‡ Perhaps, they were bold enough to face danger, and defy the sword, in the field of battle. Yet, were no more able to renounce the wanton allurements of beauty, or the soft solicitations of pleasure; than the *moth* can forbear fluttering about the flame, even though it singes her wings, and is scorching her to death.—Others possessed of a refined imagination, disdain the gross indulgencies of sensuality; yet are slaves to their own *domineering* passions. They are blown into the most intemperate rage, and pushed on to the most extravagant actions, by every little ruffling accident. They see the meanness, which such an ungovernable spirit argues: they feel the misery, which such internal tempests create: nay, they resolve to suppress the impetuosity of their temper. Yet, like a feather borne away by the torrent, they yield to the very first provocation, and are as furiously resentful as ever.—Will you call *these* persons free, because their task-masters and their tyrants are lodged within? Because the fetters are forged, not for the meaner, but for the immortal part of their nature?

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* John vi. 44.

† Jer. x. 5.

‡ Isa. xvii. 13.

Ther. Let us pass to the *affections*. These are to the soul, what wings are to the eagle, or sails to the ship. These always stand ready, to catch the gales of interest, and to spring at the signal of reason.

Asp. O! that they did!—But, if the wings are clogged with mire; if the sails are disproportioned to the ballast; what advantage will accrue, either to the animal, or to the vessel?—The one will, probably, be overset in the voyage; the other must lie groveling on the ground.

Ther. *Desire* seems to be the first, which “opens the mouth, or moves the wing, or peeps*.” *Desire* is active as a flame, and ever in pursuit of happiness.

Asp. What if your flame, instead of shooting upwards, should point its inverted spires to the earth? Would not this be strange, and a sign of great disorder?—*GOD* is the center of perfection, and the source of felicity. All that is amiable in itself, is comprehended in *GOD*. All that is beneficial to us, proceeds from *GOD*. Do our desires uniformly tend to this super-excellent Being? Do our wishes terminate in the enjoyment of his ever-glorious majesty? Alas! we are naturally estranged from him: we covet no communion with him. We are wedded to trifles, and dote upon vanity. But to *GOD* we say—it is evidently the language of our conduct—*Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways†*.

If desire is the first-born among the affections, observe it in children. There it appears in its dawn, and has most of pure nature.—See, how those *flies*, exulting in the sunny gleam, vibrate with all the rapidity of motion their little wings‡. So prompt and expedite, are the desires of children, to any corrupting diversion.—See, how sluggishly that *snail*, crawling forth amidst the refreshing moisture, drags her slow length along. So dull||, if not reluctant are

* Isai. x. 14.

† Job xli. 14.

‡ The wings of a fly are supposed to have the quickest motion, of any material substance which lives. And if they make, as naturalists imagine, some hundreds of vibrations in a second of time, I think, there can be no competition in the case.

|| Heb. i. 22.

the dispositions of our children, to any improving exercise. Rewards will hardly win them to the latter; the rod can hardly deter them from the former.—And none, none but GOD, “by his *special* grace preventing them, can put in “to their minds good desires*.”

Is our love under better regulation?—How easily are we captivated with a fair complexion and graceful form; especially, when set off with the decorations of dress. But how little affected with the beauty of internal character; with the ornaments of virtue, and the graces of *christianity*; Can it be supposed, that the pulse of the soul beats regularly; where there is such a *passionate fondness* for fading embellishments, and such a *cold indifference* for the most substantial endowments?—How easily are we smitten with riches † and splendor! How our hearts dance under a sense of distinction, superiority, or preferment! yet how backward to love that infinitely loving and lovely REDEEMER, who would die himself, rather than we should become a prey to death! Tinder we are, perfect tinder to the sparks of irrational and dissolute affection. Harder than adamant, colder than ice, to this heavenly flame.

Ther. If our love is blind, our *fear* has not lost her eyes. Fear is quick of apprehension: and, instead of being stupidly insensible, is ready to “rise up at the voice of a “bird ‡.”

Asp. The passion of fear is sufficiently active, but deplorably misapplied.—We fear the reproach of men. But are we alarmed at the view of that everlasting shame, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall pour upon the ungodly? We shudder at the drawn dagger, and stand appalled at the headlong precipice. But how often have we defied the sword of Almighty vengeance, and sported upon the brink of irretrievable perdition?

* Collect for Easter-Day.

† On this account, because we are naturally lovers of riches, of pleasure, and of the world, more than of GOD our SAVIOUR, the Scripture arraigns us as *adulterers and adulteresses*. James iv. 4.

‡ Eccles. xii. 4.

Sin is the most pernicious of all evils. Sin violates the divine command, and provokes the Divine MAJESTY. Sin offers despite to the blessed SPIRIT, and tramples upon the blood of JESUS. For sin, the transgressor is banished from the blissful presence of GOD, and doomed to dwell with inextinguishable burnings. Do we dread this *grand destroyer* of our happiness? Dread it more than any calamities, more than all plagues?—Take one of those fine may-dukes, which glow with such an inviting scarlet, on yonder espalier. Offer it to the *blackbird*, that serenades us from the neighbouring elm. The creature, though fond of the dainty, will fly from your hand, as hastily as from a leveled fowling-piece. He suspects a design upon his liberty; and therefore will endure any extremity, will even starve to death, rather than taste the most tempting delicacy in such hazardous circumstances.—Are we equally fearful of an infinitely greater danger? Do we fly, with equal solicitude * from the delusive but destructive wiles of sin? alas! Do not we too often *swallow* the bait, even when we discover the fatal hook? Do we not snatch the forbidden fruit, though conscience remonstrates; though GOD prohibits; though death eternal threatens!

Ther. Conscience then, according to your own account, has escaped the general shipwreck; conscience is GOD's vicegerent in the soul, and executes her office faithfully. Even the Gentiles *shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another* †.

Asp. If there be any remains of the divine image, perhaps, they are to be found in the conscience. But even this is not exempt from the common ruin.—Consider its *light*. It is like a dim taper, feebly glimmering; and just serving to make the darkness visible. Or, if it discovers, it discovers only an obscure something. We know not what.

* The instigating admonition, transmitted to *Agrippinus* by an anonymous letter, when the Papists had formed a plot against his life, should be the rule of our conduct on such an occasion. Fuge! Fuge! cup—titius—passime.

† Rom. ii. 15.

Which, instead of informing, tantalizes us; and instead of guiding, bewitches us. As false and delusory lights on the shore, put a check upon the mariner; and, instead of directing him to safety, mislead him into danger *—Consider its operations. It is either dumb or dead, or both. *Dumb*; or else how vehemently would it upbraid us, for our shocking ingratitude to our Supreme Omnipotent BENEFAC-TOR? How loudly would it inveigh against our stupid neglect of spiritual interests, and eternal ages? *Dead*; otherwise how keenly would it smart, when gashed with wounds—*numerous*, as our repeated violations of the divine law—*deep*, as the horrid aggravations of our various iniquities.

Ther. Do you call this an answer to my objection, Aspasio? If it be an answer, it resembles, in point of satisfactory evidence, the light which you ascribe to the conscience.

Asp. The *Gentiles*, we own, shew the *work*, but not the *love* of the law, written on their hearts. Some leading notions of right and wrong they have: some speculative strictures of good and evil. But without a *real abhorrence* of the one, or a *cordial delight* in the other. Which, far from ennobling their nature, far from vindicating their practice, argues the exceeding depravity of the former, and absolutely without excuse.

No; you say, conscience excuses the Heathens. Rather, their conscience *bears witness* to the equity of the law; while their thoughts *make some weak apology*, for the tenour of their conduct. This, is far from acquitting, far from justifying them.—Besides, these weak attempts to excuse, are always founded on ignorance. Did they know themselves, their duty, or their GOD, conscience would, without the least hesitation, bring in her verdict, *guilty*. The Apostle assures us, that, till faith, which is a divine principle, takes place in our breasts, *both the mind and conscience*

* This seems to have been the case with the *Heathen* world.—Conscience arraigned and found them guilty. This put them upon practicing their *abominable*, sometimes their *new* idolatries.

are defiled* . . Here, and elsewhere, plainly intimating; that the conscience is evil, and ever will be evil, till it is sprinkled with the blood of CHRIST†.

It accuses some, and it ought to accuse, yea, to condemn all. But even here it evidences itself to be corrupt. For, its accusations sometimes are *erroneous*, and no better than false witness; sometimes partial, and suborned by appetite; and very, very often *ineffectual*.—Nay, when they do take effect, they produce no fruit that is truly good. They work not a genuine humiliation, or an unfeigned repentance; but either a slavish dread of GOD, as a severe judge; or hatred of him, as an inexorable enemy.

Ther. Hatred of GOD—Astonishing impiety! Is it possible for the human heart to admit such enormous, almost incredible wickedness?

Asp. You may well be astonished, Theron; and GOD may justly demand; *What iniquity have my people found in me, that they are gone far from me †?* “I created them out of nothing, and endowed them with an immortal soul. As a father, I have provided for them. As a nurse, I have cherished them.—I have given them the earth, and the fulness thereof, for their present accommodation. I have prepared heaven, and its unspeakable happiness, for their future enjoyment. All my creatures do them service, and even my angels minister unto their good.—Do they desire greater demonstrations of my love? I have given them, what was dearer to me than all worlds. I have given to them my SON from my bosom, to die in their stead.—Would they have farther evidences of my distinguished regard? Behold! I touch the mountains, and they smoke: I look upon the earth and it trembles: I cast even the Princes of Heaven, when they break my law, into chains of darkness. But to disobedient and rebellious men, I condescend to act as a supplicant. Though highly injured, and horribly affronted, I beseech them—again and again I beseech them—saying, *BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD.*”

To hate * such a GOD, is indeed the most detestable impiety, almost incredible wickedness. Yet man, foolish man, practises this impiety, whenever, for the sake of a vile lust, and ignoble pleasure, or an unruly passion, he transgresses the command of his CREATOR.

Shall I exemplify the doctrine, in another of the affections?

Ther. In truth, Aspasio, I begin to be sick of the subject. If human nature is so ulcerated, the less you touch it the better.—However, let us not quite omit the *irascible* appetite.

Asp. Of this we have already taken a side-view ; if you choose to see it in fuller proportion, make your observation on *Fervidus*.—*Fervidus* comes home in a rage. See his fierce indignant eye ! mark his wild irregular gait ! now his cheek kindles into flame : in a moment, it is pale as the corpse. His lips quiver, and words are half choaked in their utterance. Yet, though he can hardly speak, he vows revenge, and utters imprecations.—What, I beseech you, is the cause of all this wondrous ferment ? why truly, a neighbour has dropt some reflecting hint, or a servant has blundered in some trifling message. Such usage, *Fervidus* says, is intolerable ; and such negligence unpardonable.—This same *Fervidus* has offered numberless affronts to his MAKER ; he has most scandalously neglected the will of his Almighty LORD ; yet feels no indignation against himself. But when the interest of CHRIST is wounded, he can sit as unconcerned, or pass it off with a laugh.—Anger, I acknowledge, is sometimes becoming and useful. But is *this* its right temperature ? *this* its proper application ?

Ther. This is the practice only of some few turbulent and boisterous spirits. To saddle *their* qualities upon *every* person, is a procedure just as equitable, as the madman's

* Hatred of GOD is so shocking an expression, that one would almost wish, never to hear or read it. But it occurs in our unerring book ; is too often exemplified in common life, and is engraven by corrupt nature on every human heart. See *Rom.* i. 30. *Exod.* xx. 5. *John* xv. 15. *Rom.* viii. 7.

calculation * was reasonable; who took an account of every ship, which entered the harbour, and put it down to his own.

Asp. The latter part of my charge, I fear, is applicable to more than a few.—However, let us consider the most calm and sedate minds. How are they affected under injuries? Do they never aggravate failings into crimes? Do they find it easy to abstain from every emotion of ill-will? Easy to love their enemies, and to do good to those who hate them? these godlike tempers, if our nature was not degenerated, would be the spontaneous produce of the soul. But now, alas! they are not raised, without much difficulty; seldom come to any considerable degree of eminence; never arrive at a state of true perfection. An undoubted proof, that they are *exotics*, not *natives* of the soil.

Now we are speaking of plants, cast your eye upon the kitchen-garden. Many of those herbs, will perfume the hard hand, which crushes them; and embalm the rude foot, which tramples on them. Such was the benign conduct of our LORD. He always overcame evil with good. When his disciples disregarded him, in his bitter agony, he made the kindest excuse for their ungrateful stupidity †. When his enemies, with unparalled barbarity, split his very blood; he pleaded *their* ignorance, as an extenuation of their guilt ‡.—Is the same spirit in us, which was also in our Divine MASTER? Then are our passions rightly poised, and duly tempered. But if resentment kindles, and animosity rankles in our hearts; this is an infallible sign, that we swerve from our SAVIOUR's pattern; consequently, are fallen from our primitive rectitude.

Ther. What say you of the fancy? This is sure, if no other faculty, retains this primitive rectitude. What pictures does she form, and what excursions does she make? She can dive to the bottom of the ocean; can soar to the height of the stars; and walk upon the boundaries of creation.

* Thrasyllus, an Athenian.

† Matt. xxvi. 41.

‡ Luke xxiii. 34.

Asp. That the fancy is lively and excursive, I readily grant. It can out-travel the post, or out-fly the eagle. But if it travel only to pick *shells*; or fly abroad, to bring home *mischiefs*; then, I apprehend, though you should admire the faculty, you will hardly be in raptures with its agency.—This is the real truth. Our fancy, till divine grace regulate and exalt its operations, is generally employed in picking painted shells, or culling venomous herbs. *Weaving* (as the Prophet very elegant, and no less exactly describes the case) *the spider's web, or hatching cockatrice eggs**. Busied in the absurd impertinences; or acting in speculation, the vilest iniquities. That, which should be a *garden inclosed, a fountain sealed* †, for the PRINCE of peace, is the thoroughfare of vanity.—And even when we are renewed from above, O! how necessary is it, to keep an incessant watch, and exercise a strict discipline, over this volatile, variable, treacherous *vagrant*!

The *memory*, as well as the fancy, is not impaired is debauched. Why else does it so firmly retain the impressions of an injury, but so easily slip the remembrance of a benefit? Any idle fopperies, which sooth our vanity, and increase our corruption, cleave to the thoughts, as the vexatious burr to our clothes. While the noble truths of the gospel, and the rich mercies of a gracious GOD, slide away from the mind (as water from the feathers of a swann) and leave no lasting trace behind them. This double perverseness is very emphatically, and too truly represented by *Jeremiah*; *Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number* ‡.—If we hear a loose hint, or read an immodest expression, they are almost sure to fasten themselves on our memory. If shaken off, they follow us with a troublesome importunity. If excluded, as unwelcome visitants, they force themselves, again and again, upon our imagination. They dog us to the closet; they haunt our most retired hours; and too often disturb our very devotions.—Tell me

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* *Isai. lix. 6.*

† *Cant. iv. 11.*

‡ *Jer. li. 29.*

now, can the faculty be upright and uncorrupted, which is a *perforated sieve*, to transmit the beneficial; but a *thirsty sponge*, to imbibe the pernicious*.

Ther. Well my friend, whatever guilt I or others have contracted, *flattery*, I dare be positive, is none of yours.—Human nature has received no heightening or adulatory touches from your pencil. You have portrayed her *foolish* and *beastly*, and every thing bad but *devilish*. —

Asp. And this, even this abomination, I must not secrete, I dare not except.—*Envy* is a devilish disposition. It substitutes no where, but in damned spirits, and fallen souls. Yet, infernal as it is, it has been found in persons of the most exalted character. The magnanimous *Joshua* felt its cankerous tooth†. The disciples of the blessed JESUS were soured with its malignant leaven‡. An Apostle declares, that *the spirit which dwelleth in us lusteth to envy* ||; is impetuously prone to that detestable temper.

Lying is confessedly a diabolical practice. Yet, how unaccountably forward are our children, to utter falshood? As soon as they are born, they go astray; and as soon as they speak, they speak lies.—I said *unaccountably*. But I recall the expression. The cause is evident. They have lost the image of the GOD of truth; and are become like that apostate spirit, who *is a lyar, and the father of it*. §.

What think you of malice, of hate, and revenge? Are they not each a species of murder, and the seed of the old serpent? Unless, therefore, we are entirely free from all those hellish emotions, we must, *we must* acknowledge, that the Prince of this world ¶ has his party within us. May the Almighty hand of our GOD extirpate and subdue it, day by day!

* This remark suggests a solid confutation of that specious argument, frequently used to bear off of *some fashionable but dissolute diversions*. "They are interspersed, say their admirers, with sentiments of virtue, and maxims of morality."—Should we admit the truth of this plea; yet the depraved disposition of mankind, is pretty sure to drop the morality, and carry away the ribaldry.

† Num. xii. 29.

‡ Matt. xx. 24.

|| James iv. 5.

§ John viii. 44.

¶ John xiv. 30.

You tell me I am *no flatterer*.—Should a person, who professes himself the friend of his fellow-creatures, soothe them into a *false* peace? Should he bolster them up in a *groundless* conceit of their excellency, when they are really no better than “an unclean thing?”—Shall the surgeon assure his patient, “All is well;” even when the mortification has taken place, and the gangrene is spreading? This were to refine the first out of all benevolence, and do flatter the last into his grave.

A disputant of less complaisance than my Theron, would probably ask, with a contemptuous sneer; “Have you then *been drawing your own picture?*”—To whom I would reply, with confusion, and sorrow, “I have.” Alledging this only, to moderate *my confusion*; That I am daily seeking, by prayer and watchfulness, more and more *to put off this old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust.**

And, to alleviate *my sorrow*, I am endeavouring continually to remember; that however unworthy I am, however vile I may have been, my adored REDEEMER’S righteousness is perfect; and in this righteousness, every believer is to make his boast.

Ther. So then man is blind in his understanding; perverse in his will; disorderly in his affections; influenced by dispositions, which are partly brutal, and partly diabolical.—I have often heard you extol, in terms of high admiration, the virtue of humility. You have lavished all the riches of eloquence, with haranguing on poverty of spirit. If *such* be the condition of mankind, they have infinite cause to be poor in spirit. They must, therefore, have *one* excellency left; and, according to your own account, a very distinguishing one.

Asp. Scarce any thing displays, in a more glaring light, the extreme depravity of man, than his strong propensity to *pride*; notwithstanding so much vileness, and so many deformities.—Should the noisome leper admire the *beauty* of his complexion, or the impotent paralytic glory in the

strength of his sinews; would they not be mistaken, even to a degree of sottishness and frenzy? Yet, for man, fallen man, who has lost his original righteousness, which was the true ornament of his nature; who is become subject to base and sordid lusts; or, as the Apostle speaks, *is earthly and sensual*—for him to be proud, is still more absurdly wicked. And since this is the case, I cannot acquit him from the last and heaviest article of the sacred writer's charge; I have a fresh and more convincing proof, that we do him no wrong, when we call his nature, his disposition, his *wisdom*—*devilish* *.

Ther. Why do you reckon pride an universally prevailing corruption? I see no ground for such a dishonourable suspicion. I hope, I myself am an instance of the contrary. To unguarded sallies of passion, to several other vices, I confess myself subject, but cannot think that I am proud.

Ah! Theron, if you was not proud, you would not errate. Unreasonable anger always proceeds from a conceited opinion of our own worth.—One who, after having acquired knowledge of human nature, had the gift of discerning spirits, is observed to join these two weaknesses †. Intimating, that they are amiable twins, where the former exists, the latter cannot be absent.—Always consistent with himself, he links together the opposite vices, *hasty and high-minded* ‡: not observing, that those who are easily provoked, are certainly less proud, without offence? If we fancy only being proud.—Shall I accuse the weeds of vanity, and our minds to be clear from the tangles of self-admiration, it is a oughts free from the work. We are over-run with the first, and pregnant symptom, that we are blinded by both, is abandoned to the last; and

* James ii. 15.

† Eph. iv. 3. The same constitution is made by over-looked; Learn of ME, for I am mild and lowly.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 4. In the same strain speaks Peter: His pride, and his wrath, Obey me.

Pride was the first sin, that found entrance into our nature; and it is, perhaps, the last that will be expelled.—What are all our afflictions, but a remedy provided for this inveterate disease? Intended to *hide pride* from man*. What is the institution of the gospel, but a battery erected against this strong hold of Satan? ordained to *cast down every high imagination†*.—Though that remedy is often applied, though this battery is continually playing; yet the peccant humour is not entirely purged off, nor the elatement of spirit totally subdued, till *mortality is swallowed up of life*.

Pride is the sin, which most easily besets us. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean†* from this iniquity? It defiles our duties, and intermingles itself with our very virtues. It starts up, I know not how, in our most solemn hours, and our most sacred employs.—The good *Hezekiah*, whose prayers were more powerful than all the forces of *Sennacherib*, was not proofs against the wiles of this subtle sorceress‖. Even the holy Apostle, who had been caught up into the third heavens, was in danger of being puffed up with pride. In such great danger, that it was necessary to put a lancet into the gathering tumour; or, as he himself expresses it, to fix a *thorn in his flesh§*, and permit the *messenger of Satan to buffet him*.

How pathetically is this corruption lamented, and how truly described, by “a sweet singer of our *Israel*.”

But pride, that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform,
Curs'd pride! that creeps securely in,
And swells a haughty worm.

Thy glories I abate,
Or praise thee with design;

* Job. xxxiii. 17.

† 1 Cor. x. 4, 5.

‡ Prov. xx. 9.

§ 1 Chron. xxxi. 25.

¶ 1 Cor. xii. 7.

Part of thy favors I forget,
Or think the merit mine.

The very songs I frame,
Are fruitless to thy cause;
And steal the honors of thy name,
To build their own applause *.

Ther. Now, I presume, you have given the last touches to your distorted portrait.

Asp. There are other disagreeable and shocking features. But those I shall cast into shades, or hide under a veil. One particular you must allow me to add; which, like a sullen air in the countenance, throws aggravated horror over the whole. I mean, an inclination to be fond of our slavery. —Do you remember the story of *Demaratus*, the *Lacedæmonian* Prince?

Ther. Being deposed by his countrymen, and banished from *Sparta*, he was constrained to seek protection in the *Aereian* court. For a while he might seem reconciled to his vassalage, and suppress the *Spartan* in his breast. But when he beheld *Leonidas* and his gallant troops preparing to defend the pass of *Thermopylæ*, he could disguise himself no longer. The tears trickled down his cheeks. He bitterly lamented his dishonorable situation. He extolled the *Grecians* to *Xerxes's* face; and longed to join those brave patrons of liberty. But was detained, still detained, by his hard circumstances, among the vile stipendiaries of tyranny †.

Asp. Yes; in this instance, and in others, *the captive exile hasteth to be loosed* ‡. But we alas! we prefer bondage to freedom, and are loth to leave our prison.—Of this, our backwardness to *self-examination*, is both a consequence

* *Watts's Hor. Lyr.*

† The generous spirit, but calamitous fate, of this royal exile, are finely described in *Mr. Glover's Leonidas*, Book III.

‡ *Isai. li. 24.*

and a proof.—Self-examination, under the agency of the blessed SPIRIT, would open a window in our dungeon; would shew us our wretched condition, and teach us to sigh for deliverance.—Why have we such a dislike for reproof? because we hug our chains, and choose darkness rather than light. Reproof is more grating than the harshest discord; though it tends to dissolve the enchantment, and rescue us from the tyranny of sin. While *flattery*, which abets the delusion, and strengthens the spell, is music to our ears.—Is not our reason, which should arraign and condemn every irregularity, forward to invent excuses, and to spare the favourite folly? Reason, which should unsheath the *dagger*, superintends the mask; and, instead of striking at the heart of our vices, creeps them under the cover of some plausible names. A wicked habit is called a human infirmity; ensnaring diversions pass for innocent amusements; a revengeful disposition is termed spirit, gallantry, and honor. Thus our reason (if, when so egregiously perverted, it deserves the name) is ingenious to obstruct our recovery; and rivets on the shackles, which our passions have formed.

This the eternal wisdom foresaw, and therefore uttered that tender expostulation; *How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?* Even the inestimably precious knowledge of an all-atoning and completely justifying SAVI-OUR; who preaches, who has purchased, and who works deliverance—preaches in his word, has purchased by his blood, and works by his SPIRIT, deliverance for the captives—the wretched captives of ignorance, sin, and death*.

This I take to be the most *flagrant* and *deplorable* effect of human depravity—our aversion to the doctrine, the privileges, the grace of the gospel. Beware, my dear friend, lest you prove my point by—shall I speak it?—your own practice.—Zealous as I am for my tenets, I should be sorry, to have *such* a demonstration of their truth.

Ther. You are highly obliging, Aspasio, to single me out for your evidence. Yet why should the honor be appropri-

ated to myself? It belongs, upon the foot of the preceding calculation, not to your friend only, but to the whole species.—If you was aiming at none but the licentious and abandoned, you would have none to oppose you, but persons of that character. Your arrows of satire, would then be rightly levelled, and might be serviceable to mankind. Whereas, to put *all* in the black list; to mark *all* with the villain's brand? this can never be *Christian* charity; this is unsufferable censoriousness.

Asp. Let me beseech you, Theron, not to misapprehend my design. I speak not as a malevolent satirist, but would imitate a physician. I am opening the sore, that it may admit the healing balm; and should I perform the operation with an *envenomed* instrument? My soul abhors the thought.—I must entreat you likewise to remember the distinction, between a state of nature, and a state of grace. We are all naturally evil. *The world*, says the Apostle—lest we should imagine, that the charge is advanced only against some abandoned wretches, he enlarges the indictment; he renders it universal—*the whole world*; not barely slips by inadvertence into a single sin, or falls through infirmity into frequent miscarriages, but *lieth in wickedness* *. As the ax-head, mentioned by the sacred historian, lay all torpid and sluggish at the bottom of *Jordan* †. In this miserable condition we should remain; yes, ever remain, did not a supernatural power *work in us both to will and to do*; somewhat like that power which caused the ponderous iron to rise in the water, and swim on the surface.

It is this supernatural power which makes some to differ both from their original selves, and also from the generality of all their neighbours.—Are they too reformed in their temper, and reformed in their life? I grant it. But then it is not any ability of their own, it is the influence of the sanctifying SPIRIT, which purges away their dross; yet not without leaving *some alloy*.

Ther. Here, Aspasio, you certainly strain the bow, till it breaks. Since Scripture itself celebrates some persons, as

* 1 John v. 19.

† 2 Kings vi. 6.

absolutely perfect.—What says *Moses*, the inspired historian? *Noah was perfect in his generation* *.—What says the GOD of *Moses*, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived? *Job was a perfect man and an upright* †.—Consequently, *their* nature must be entirely cleansed from this hereditary defilement; and *their* character confutes your derogatory representations of mankind.

Asp. Those eminent saints were perfect. That is, they were sanctified throughout. No one grace of religion was lacking. As in the new-born infant, there is a human creature complete; no constituent part of the vital frame is wanting; though each is tender; all are very feeble; and none arrived at the full size.

They were *upright*. This word seems to be explanatory of the preceding; and signifies an unfeigned desire, joined with a hearty endeavour, to obey the whole will of GOD: excluding, not all defect, but all *prevailing hypocrisy*, and *wilful remissness*.—The interpretation, thus limited, is of a piece with their conduct. If stretched to a higher pitch, it is evidently inconsistent with the narrative of their lives.

Pray, what was your motive, for decorating the silvan retirement (which sheltered us yesterday) with the statue of *Elijah*?

Ther. Because I thought, his solitary life, and gloomy temper, suited that sequestered bower. Because the memorable adventure, there represented, is with me, a favorite portion of sacred history.

Are we pleased with spirited and delicate *rallery*? Nothing exceeds his pungent sarcasm, on the stupid and despicable dupes of idolatry. Every sentence is keen as a razor, and pointed as a dagger, yet wears the appearance of the most courtly complaisance. We may truly say, in the beautiful language of the *Psalmist*, *His words are smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords* ‡.

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* Gen. vi. 9.

† Job i. 1.

‡ 1 Kings xviii. 27.

Are we delighted with instances of *magnanimity*? A single prophet, unsupported by any human aid, maintains the cause of truth against the King, his grandees, and hundreds of the apostate Priests. He ventures to stake all his credit, to risk his very life, and (what was dearer to him than personal credit, or bodily life) the honor of the true GOD, and interests of his holy religion—to risk all on the *immediate* interposition of a most surprizing miracle.

Do we admire the triumphs of faith? his faith ~~was~~, in a manner, omnipotent. He prays, and *torrents of fire* descend from the sky, to devour his adversaries*.—He prays again, and the sluices of heaven are *shut*; there is neither dew nor shower for several years†.—A third time he prays, and the windows from on high are *opened*; abundance of rain waters the earth‡.—On another occasion, he presents his supplications, and GOD makes his feet like harts feet. Insomuch than an aged Prophet *outruns* the royal chariot§.

Asp. I commend your taste, Theron: and am particularly pleased with the reasons of your choice.—But do not you remember, that even the wonder-working *Tishbite* failed in his resignation, and failed in his faith? Eminent as he was for mortification, he gave way to *unreasonable* discontent; and, though a champion for the living GOD, he yielded to *unbelieving fear*||.—*The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth¶*: Yet he, even he was provoked in his spirit, and spake unadvisedly with his lips**.—Was not Peter the hero among our LORD's followers? Yet he trembles, more than trembles, at the shaking of a leaf; he denies his divine MASTER, scared by the voice of a woman.

Look wher-ever we will, we find proofs of human depravity; reigning *uncountrouled* in some, making frequent

* 2 Kings i. 10.

† 2 Kings xvii. 1.

‡ James v. 17, 18.

§ 2 Kings xviii. 46.

|| Elias, or rather Elijah, was a man who was subject to such like passions as we are James v. 17.

¶ Numb. xii. 3.

** Psal. cvi. 39.

insurrection in all. It is written on our own hearts, by the pen of experience; the finger of observation points it out, in the practice of others. Even in the practice of those, who have been saints of the first rank, and of the highest endowments. Yet they were defective,—Defective too, in *that very quality*, which was their distinguishing gift; in which they particularly excelled.

Ther. While we are talking, the day has insensibly stole itself away, and left us surrounded with twilight. Which is a sort of lustre intermingled with darkness: no part wholly lucid; no part wholly obscure.—An emblem, according to your representation, of the renewed soul, and its imperfect holiness.

Asp. A very just one.—Even where the gospel shines, still there is an *intercurrent* gloom of corruption. Ignorance mixes itself with our knowledge. Unbelief cleaves to our faith.—Nor is our purity free from all contamination.—The Prophet *Zechariah*, foretelling the establishment of the gospel kingdom, and describing the state of its spiritual subjects, says; *It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark**. This, as to its literal sense, we now see exemplified in the circumambient atmosphere. With regard to its *spiritual* meaning, every true believer feels it accomplished in his own breast.

Ther. While you are so vehement, in decrying all human attainments; consider *Aspasio*, whether you do not *check* and *dispirit* us, in the pursuit of exalted virtue.

Asp. I suppose, you never expected to be such an adept in geometry as *Archimedes*, nor so profound an astronomer as *Newton*; yet this did not check your application to the study of mathematics, or the contemplation of the heavens.—Your brother the merchant, I presume, has no prospect of amassing the wealth of a *Cresus*, or the immense treasures of a *Kouli-Khan*; yet this does not dispirit him in prosecuting the business, which brings him both opulence and honor.

* Zech. xvi. 6, 7.

However, Theron, so long as you deny the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness, I must acknowledge, you act a consistent part, in being zealous for the perfection of personal obedience. You ought either to acquire the one, or accept the other. Therefore, I shall produce no more arguments for your discouragement; but shall comprise the whole of my answer, in the motto to an *Irish* nobleman's arms, TRY. Or if this be too concise, I will subjoin, with a very little alteration, the words of a *Jewish* king; "When you have attained what you pursue, *bring me word again, that I may go, and attain it also* *."

Ther. According to your account, the most advanced and established christians, are but like a company of *invalids*. Does this not extremely derogate from the honor of our LORD, considered as the *physician* of souls? It seems to make a mere nothing of sanctification; and would swallow up CHRIST the king, in CHRIST the priest.

Asp. Invalids they are: and such will continue, till they are dismissed from this great infirmary, and admitted into that holy, happy, blessed world; where the inhabitant *shall no more say, I am either in soul or in body sick* †.

If the cure was never to be completed, this doubtless would be dishonorable to our Almighty PHYSICIAN. But the spiritual recovery, begun on earth, and advancing through time, will be perfected in heaven, and prolonged to eternity.—Does this make a mere nothing of sanctification? No, but it makes room for a continual progress, and afterwards for continual *humiliation*. It reserves a most exalted prerogative, for the heavenly state and beatific vision; and perpetually reminds us of a most important truth, that our present blessedness consists, not in being *free* from all sin, but in having *no sin imputed* to us †.

This imperfection of our obedience, instead of confounding, maintains a proper *distinction* between CHRIST the King, and CHRIST the Priest. Whereas, if we were perfect in piety, the priestly office, with regard to us, would be superseded. What need of an intercessor, to recommend our

* Matt. ii. 9.

† Isai. xxxiii. 24.

‡ Psal. xxxii. 2.

prayers? What occasion for an High-Priest, to *bear the iniquity of our holy things* * ? If some taint of our original leaven did not pollute our best services?

Neither does this detract from the wisdom, from the goodness, or from the power of CHRIST. It rather administers to the advantageous display of all these divine attributes.—Of his *wisdom*; in conducting the affairs of his church with such exact propriety, that the righteousness of faith may have its due honor, and the sanctification of the SPIRIT its proper esteem.—Of his *goodness*, in carrying on the work of grace, amidst so much infirmity, and so many corruptions; and in crowning, with consummate happiness, such frail undeserving creatures.—Of his *power*; in extracting a variety of benefits even from—

Ther. Benefits, Aspasio!—Can any thing beneficial proceed from an evil, which, according to your own representation, is so incorrigibly malignant?

Asp. It will tend to make us *lowly in our own eyes*. When we remember, that we are altogether become abominable; that the remains of this hereditary plague still adhere to our minds; that no one faculty of our souls, nor so much as a single action of our lives, is wholly free from this noisome infection; how must such a view of ourselves cover us with shame, and lay us low in abasement! *Less than the least of all thy mercies* †, will be the language of such a one's very soul.

It will dispose us to compassionate others. How can we take a brother by the throat, and require faultless perfection in his behaviour, when we ourselves in many things offend, in all things fall short? Every such consideration rebukes, what I may call spiritual unmercifulness. It pleads tenderness and forbearance to our fellow creatures. Is a monitor within, and whispers that affecting remonstrance; *Oughtest not thou to have compassion upon thy fellow-servant, since thy Almighty LORD hath such renewed, such unwearied pity on thee* ‡.

* Exod. xxxiii. 38. † Gen. xxxii. 10. ‡ Matt. xviii. 33.

It will teach us to admire the *riches of grace*. Shall fallen creatures, that are taken from the very dunghills of sin, and rescued from a hell of inward iniquity.—Shall *they*, notwithstanding their total depravity in a natural, and their innumerable deficiencies in a renewed state—Shall *they* be admitted into the bosom of eternal love? *They* be exalted to the thrones of glory, and numbered with the Princes of heaven? This is grace, transcendently rich, and divinely free indeed! Will it not *reconcile* us to the approach of death? this, methinks, like wormwood on the nipple, or gall in the cup, must tend to wean us from the world.

How can we be enamoured with such a land of darkness, and such a vale of tears? Or why should we covet, when providence gives the signal for departure, to prolong our abode in these territories of disorder?—Surely, this must incline us to leave them, every day, more and more in our affections; and at last, to leave them, without any reluctance, by final dissolution. Leave them, for that better country, where our personal righteousness will no longer be defective, like the *waving* moon; but shine forth with consummate lustre, like the *meridian* sun, in the kingdom of our FATHER.

It will *endear* the blessed JESUS in *every* capacity, as the stings of the fiery flying serpent, and the dearth of the waste howling wilderness, endeared to the *Israelites* both their miraculous antidote, and their bread from heaven.—They who believe this truth, must see their inexpressible and incessant need of CHRIST's spirit. The protestation of *Moses*, on a particular occasion, will be the daily, the hourly breathing of their souls; *Carry us not up hence unless, thy presence, thy SPIRIT, go with us* *. For without this aid, we can discharge no duty aright, nor successfully resist any temptation.—They will be exceedingly cautious, not to *grieve* † that sacred guest, lest he depart from them, and abandon them to the power of their lurking corruptions. Knowing, that if *he* abandon them, when such foes are within, and so many snares without, their case will be

* Exod. xxxiii. 15.

† Eph. iv. 30.

worse than Samson's, when his locks were shaven, and the Philistines all around him.

How highly will such persons value the *blood* of the covenant, and the *intercession* of their great HIGH-PRIEST! — They will no more presume to enter into the presence of the most High GOD, without a fiducial reliance upon the atoning and interceding SAVIOUR; than the sons of *Jacob* would have ventured to appear before the viceroy of *Egypt*, without the company of their brother*. — In all, in all their intercourse with heaven, the great PROPITIATION will be their plea, and the great ADVOCATE their confidence. — The impotent man waited at the pool of Bethesda, and the Syrian General dipped seven times in Jordan. These persons will not only *wait*, but *live* by the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness †. They will wash in the sacred sanctifying stream, not *seven* times only, but *seventy times* seven.

When such sentiments possess the mind, how dear? O how dear and desirable will our LORD's obedience be? Convinced that we are corrupt, universally-corrupt in the very constitution of our nature, nothing will quiet our consciences, or satisfy our souls, but the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST. — I called, sometime ago, our own works *worm-eaten things*. And must not these corruptions, if they remain ever so little in our hearts, depreciate and defile whatever proceeds from them? Must they not be, in all our works and all our duties, like *corroding vermin*, in the substance of our timber, or at the core of our fruits? Should we not then renounce, utterly renounce, what is tarnished and debased by the poison of hell? And rely, wholly, for everlasting acceptance, on our Divine HIGH-PRIEST? Who, in his mediatorial works, as well as in his wonderful person, is altogether *light* and *perfection*; and neither in them, is there any deficiency or any darkness at all.

Excuse me, Theron; I fear, I have been preaching. The importance of the text, must form my apology. It is an *introduction*, not to the records of history, or the

* Gen. xlii. 5. † Zech. xiii. 1.

of philosophy, but to the knowledge of salvation, and to the riches of CHRIST.

Ther. If my *Aspasio* has been preaching, I can assure him for his comfort, that his audience has been very attentive; and though the sermon was somewhat copious, the hearer neither slept nor gaped.—However, I should be glad to have the whole reviewed, and summed up: that if it has been large as the pyramid, it may, like the pyramid, terminate in a point.

Asp. This then is the state of our nature.—The image of the CREATOR is effaced. Wisdom, righteousness, and true holiness are lost.—View the understanding; it is blindness and stupidity.—View the affections; they are disorder and rebellion.—View the will; it is enmity against GOD, the supreme good; averse to things spiritual; but fond even to dotage, of things earthly and sensual.—The whole soul is deformed; distempered; and, to every good purpose, dead.

Mortifying, abasing views! Methinks, they should be like *Medusa's* head *, or like *Michael's* sword †, to all self-sufficiency and all self-dependence.—Shall such a creature pretend to be possessed of those sacred endowments, which may constitute a proper recommendation to infinite holiness?—Is such a creature qualified to perform those righteous acts, which may bear the test of inflexible justice? Can such a creature fulfil that extensive and exalted law, which allows of no failure; which demands perfect obedience; and denounces a curse on every transgression?

Should he conceive the vain hope, or make the vainer attempt, I would now address him, as *Jeohash* formerly answered *Amaziah*.—*Amazia* king of *Judah*, elated with the little victories he had obtained over the *Edomites*, began to fancy himself invincible. Prompted by this foolish imagination, he challenges *Jeoshaphat* king of *Israel*, to meet him in

* *Medusa's* head, the Poet tells us, was so monstrous and horrible, that the very sight of it congealed the blood. Nay; turned every beholder into stone.

† *Michael's* sword, *Milton* informs us, was so keen and forcible, that nothing could resist its edge; whatever it smote, was cut in pieces.

a pitched battle; and receives this ironical apologue by way of reply.—Which, for gallantry of spirit and delicacy of wit, for pungency of satire and propriety of application, has seldom been equaled, perhaps never exceeded.—*The thistle that was in Lebanon, sent to the Cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle* *. What are we—when we offer to establish our own Righteousness, or presume to justify ourselves before the most High GOD—but *despicable thistles*, that fancy themselves *stately cedars*? And are not various temptations, is not every corruption, a wild beast of the desert, which will trample on the impotent boaster, and tread his haughty pretensions in the dust?

* Kings. xvi. 9.



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DIALOGUE XIV.



ASPASIO was employed in preparing for his journey. Theron, free from business, and disengaged from company, had the greatest part of the day to himself. Which he spent in *reviewing* the substance of their late conferences; not without intermingled aspirations to GOD, for the guidance of his Divine SPIRIT.

At evening, he *went*, like the patriarch of old, *into the field to meditate**; amidst the calm of nature, to meditate on the grace of the gospel.—The sky was peculiarly beautiful, and perfectly clear; only where the fine *Indigo* received an agreeable heightening, by a few thin and scattered clouds; which imbibed the solar rays, and looked like pensile fleeces of purest *wool*.—All things appeared with so mild, so majestic, so charming an aspect, that, intent as he was upon a different subject, he could not but indulge the following soliloquy.

“How delightful are the scenes of rural nature! Especially, to the *philosophic* eye, and *contemplating* mind.—
“I cannot wonder, that persons in high life, are so fond of retiring from a conspicuous and exalted station, to the covert of a shady grove, or the margin of a crystal stream.
“Are so desirous of quitting the smoky town, and noisy street; in order to breathe purer air, and survey the

" wonders of creation, in the silent, the serene, the peaceful *villa*.

" 'Tis true, in the country, there are none of the modish, I had almost said, meretricious ornaments of that false politeness, which refines people out of their veracity, but an easy simplicity of manners, with an unaffected sincerity of mind. Here, the solemn farce of ceremony is seldom brought into play; and the pleasing delusions of compliment have no place. But the brow is the *real* index of the temper, and speech the *genuine* interpreter of the heart."

" In the country, I acknowledge, we are seldom invited to see the *mimic* attempts of human art. But we, every where behold the grand and masterly exertions of divine power. No *theatre* erects its narrow stage; surrounds it with puny rows of ascending seats; or adorns it, with a shifting series of gorgeous scenery. But *fields* extend their ample area; at first, lightly clad with a scarf of springing green; then, deeply planted with an arrangement of spindling stalks; as a few more weeks advance, covered with a profusion of bearded or husky grain, at last, richly laden with a harvest of yellow plenty.

" *Meadows* disclose their beautiful bosom; yield a soft and fertile lap for the luxuriant herbage; and suckle myriads of the fairest, gayest flowers. Which, without any vain ostentation, or jealous anxiety, rival each other in all the elegance of dress.—*Groves* of various leaf; arrayed in freshest verdure, and liberal of their reviving shade; rise, in amiable, in noble prospect, all around.—*Herds* of sturdy oxen, strong for labour, or fat for the shambles; *herds* of sleeky kine, with milk in their udders, and violets in their nostrils; *flocks* of well-fleeced sheep, with their snowy lambkins, frisking at their side; these compose the living machinery.—Boundless tracts of bending *azure*, varnished with inimitable delicacy, and hung with starry lamps, or irradiated with solar lustre, from the stately cieling.—While the early breezes, and evening gales; charged with no unwholesome vapours, breeding no pestilential taint; but fanning the humid

buds, and waving their odoriferous wings, dispense a
 profusion of sweets mingled with the most sovereign
 supports of health.—This is the school of industry! This
 is the magazine of plenty! And are they not incomparably
 more delightful, as well as infinitely less dangerous, than
 those seminaries of lewdness and impiety, where sin and
 ruin wear the mask of pleasure? Than those temples of
 profuseness and debauchery, where *Belial* is daily or
 nightly worshipped with, what his votaries call, modish
 recreation, and genteel amusement?

Here indeed is no tuneful voice, to melt in strains of
 amorous anguish, and transfuse the sickening fondness to
 the hearer's breast. No skilful artist, to inform the lute
 with musical enchantment; to strike infectious melody
 from the viol; and sooth away the resolution and activi-
 ty of virtue, in wanton desires, or voluptuous indolence.
 —But the plains low; the hills bleat; and the howling
 circling rocks echo with the universal song. Every val-
 ley murmurs to the fall of silver fountains, or the liquid
 lapse of gurgling rills.—Birds, when the chearful morn-
 ing rises, or the gentle evening descends, perched on a
 thousand boughs, play a thousand airs, wildly, yet sweet-
 ly harmonious. And did ever music exceed their un-
 taught sprightly warblings? Or can any colours outvie
 their gay and glossy plumage?

Charmed therefore with the finest views; lulled with
 the softest sounds; and treated with the richest odours?
 what can be wanting to complete the delight? Here is
 every entertainment for the eye; the most refined gratifi-
 cations for the ear; and a perpetual banquet for the smell;
 without any insidious decoy, for the integrity of our con-
 duct, or even for the purity of our fancy.

O ye blooming walks, and flowery lawns, surrounded
 with dewy landscapes! How often have *Patriots* and
Heroes, laid aside the burthen of power, and stole away
 from the glare of grandeur, to enjoy themselves * in your

Mibi me reddente Agelli,

says Horace of his little country-seat.

"composed cells!—Ye mossy couches, and fragrant
cooling cascades. How many *hours*
of their all-glorious day, for the public
good, in a honorable and welcome repose in
your lap?—Ye venerable oaks, and solemn
at whisper to the quivering gale
the darkened flood? Who can num-
id *saints*, that have devoted the day to
or resigned a vacant hour to healthy exercise, be-
neath your silvan porticos, and waving arches? That, far
from the dull impertinence of man, have listened to the
instructive voice of GOD; and contemplated the works
of his adorable hand, amidst your moss-grown cells, and
rocky shades.—How *inelegant*, or how *insensible* is the
mind, which has no awakened lively relish for these sweet
recesses, and their exquisite beauties!"

But whither am I carried? Is not this rural enthusiasm?
I find myself talking to trees; and forget the momentous
question, which waits for our decision. Here then let my
cease, and my enquiry proceed.—Does it betray
true delicacy, to be insensible of nature's charms?
—thinks, it argues as a wrong a taste in practi-
not to acquiesce in the imputed righteousness
CHRIST.—To this doctrine I have always been
averse. I set myself to oppose it with objec-
tions, drawn from the *reason* of things, and from various
passages of *scripture*. To all which my friend replied.
and though I was scarcely convinced, yet I was silenced
his answers.

I pleaded for the sufficiency of our *sincere* obedience,
Especially when accompanied with *repentance*, and recom-
mended by the *merits* of CHRIST.—Neither was this at-
tempt successful. His arguments, somewhat like the flam-
ing sword, planted at the entrance of Paradise, *turned every*
way; and precluded all access to life, on the foot of our
own duties.

For instance with the amiableness of these scenes, that he assigns them to im-
pure spirits, in the regions of Elysium.

DIALOGUES.

At length, *Aspasio* quitted the defensive, and attacked me in his turn. He explained the precepts, and enforced the threatenings of the divine law. *So exact its*

requirements in the most thoughts; and requires obedience, not barely in the actions of the life, but the very intentions of the heart.—*So inexorable its severity*; that it condemns every the smallest offence, and curses every the least offender.

This remonstrance had some of the terror, and almost all the effect, of a masked battery.—It was quite unexpected, and alarmed me considerably.—To push his advantage, he enlarged upon the infinite purity of GOD.—A GOD glorious in holiness: *Who cannot look upon evil*, with any connivance, or without the utmost abhorrence. *Who will assuredly destroy*, either the sin, or the sinner, from before his face.

To complete his victory, he played off the doctrine of original guilt, and original depravity. That I am, by nature, *a child of wrath*. Fallen from GOD by the apostacy of the first Adam. Dead in trespasses and sins. *My will*, enmity against GOD: all my faculties corrupt: every imagination evil!

After all, he bid me consider—What fruits must spring from *such a nature*?—How they must appear, when compared with *such a law*? What they must deserve, when tried before *such a GOD*? And whether I will venture to put myself upon trial at the divine tribunal, on the plea of such performances?

These, I must confess, are very weighty and startling queries. If these representations are true, the face of human affairs carries a most gloomy aspect. Or rather a most dreadful storm is hanging over the children of men. *Aspasio* urges me to fly, without any delay, to the covert of CHRIST's meritorious obedience. This, he says, was wrought out, in the name, and in the stead of sinners: this will be admitted, both at the Throne of Grace, and the Bar of Judgement, as their justifying righteousness.

This, he adds, opens a way, on GOD's part, for the largest emanations and most honorable exercise of mercy. On man's part, it founds a title for pardon, to life, and every spiritual blessing.—This doctrine, especially in such a connection, begins to put on a *more recommending appearance*. My prejudices are really wearing away. I am almost a convert.

Aspasio over-heard the close of these reflections. Unwilling to interrupt his friend, in so serious an enquiry; and desirous to observe the issue of so interesting a debate; he had hitherto concealed himself. But thinking this a favorable minute, he stepped forward, and said—

Asp. Almost! and why not *altogether* a convert? What should hinder my dear Theron, from submitting to so rational a scheme, with the most entire acquiescence? What should hinder him from embracing so *comfortable* a doctrine, with the utmost complacency, why should he not subscribe, both with hand and heart, that divine decree? *Their righteousness is of me saith the LORD**

Ther. If, by this doctrine, the claims of the law are answered—If the perfections of GOD are glorified—If the interests of morality are secured—I must acknowledge, it will be *more worthy* of acceptance, than I could once have imagined.

Asp. If, by this doctrine, the claims of the law are answered—If the perfections of GOD are glorified—If the interests of morality are secured—I must acknowledge, it will be *more worthy* of acceptance, than I could once have imagined.

Asp. And if all these points are not gained; gained too in the most eminent manner; I solemnly declare, that I will never plead for imputed righteousness more.

But the *claims* of the law are all answered.—For, there is nothing in its sacred injunctions, which CHRIST did not perform; and nothing in its awful threatenings, which CHRIST, did not sustain. He fulfilled all its precepts, by an unspotted purity of heart, and the most perfect integrity

of life. He exhausted its whole curse, when he hung upon the cross, abandoned by his FATHER, and a bleeding victim for the sins of his people.—This obedience brings higher honor to the divine law, than it could possibly have received, from the uninterrupted duty of Adam, and all his posterity, in all their generations.

The *perfections* of GOD, which were dishonored by our rebellion, are glorified.—He appears, by this method of justification, inconceivably rich in shewing mercy; yet steady, inflexibly steady, in executing vengeance. The *sceptre* of grace, and the *sword* of justice, have each its due exercise, each its full scope. The holiness of the divine nature, and the dignity of the divine government, are not only maintained, but most magnificently displayed. Indeed, it is the peculiar excellence of this wonderful expedient, that it renders *all* the divine attributes supremely venerable, and supremely amiable.

Ther. But are the interests of *morality* secured? This is what I am strongly inclined to doubt. And to say the truth, this is now my principal objection to your scheme.

Asp. I shall never blame my friend, for being vigilant and zealous over the interests of morality. If our doctrine had a malignant aspect on true morality, I would give my voice against it, and use all my endeavours to suppress it.—But it is formed with every tendency to awaken the *most dread* of sin, and affect us with the *warmest sense* of our CREATOR's love. And is not *that* the strongest barrier against the encroachments of vice? Is not *this* the sweetest inducement to the practice of virtue?

I am glad to find, that a jealousy for the interests of morality, is the chief obstacle in the way of your assent. Because, this jealousy, I am persuaded, is much of the same nature with these forbidding and mistaken apprehensions, which our ancestors entertained, concerning the ocean. They looked upon the ocean, as an unsurmountable obstruction and bar to universal society. Whereas, it is in fact, the very opening and avenue to this society; the only means of setting on foot a general intercourse; and the great highway to all the nations of the earth. What is here affirmed,

may, on some future occasion, be proved.—At present, let me desire you to imagine, rather, may the blessed SPIRIT enable you to believe, that your sins *are expiated*, through the death of JESUS CHRIST: that a righteousness is given you, by virtue of which, you may have free and welcome access to GOD, the merit of which you may plead, in order to enjoy all the blessings of time and eternity.—Then let me ask; will this *alienate* your affections from your Almighty BENEFACTOR? will this *irritate* evil concupiscence, or send you to carnal gratifications in quest of happiness? Quite the reverse. When this faith is wrought in your heart, nothing will be so powerful, to produce holy love, and willing obedience; nothing so effectual, to refine your temper, to exalt your desires, and enable you to overcome the world.

What says the Apostle? *I through the law am dead to the law* *. Being made to understand its great extent, and high perfection, I have no longer any hope of justification, through my own conformity to its precepts.—Did this prompt him, did this emholden him, to neglect or violate his duty? Hear the sacred writer's own declaration. I am released from the rigour and bondage of the law; I am directed to CHRIST for righteousness and salvation; *that I may live with GOD*. That my whole life may be devoted to his honor, who has brought me into a state so delightful, into a liberty so glorious.

Ther. This liberty, I am afraid, will be of very little service to the licentious and gay world.

Asp. I shall be in no pain even for the *gay world*, if once they cordially receive this grace, and are vitally influenced by this doctrine. Which, far from weakening any one principle of piety, adds to every motive, the endearing engagements of gratitude, and the winning persuasives of love.

Nay; I am persuaded, that multitudes in the gay and licentious world, are held fast in the fatal snare, by their ignorance of this sweet, alluring, consolatory truth. They

find themselves deeply obnoxious to divine justice, and feel themselves strongly bound with the chains of sensuality. They think, it is impossible to clear the enormous score of their guilt; impossible to deliver themselves from the confirmed dominion of sin. Therefore, like *desperate* debtors, they stifle every serious thought; lest a consciousness of their own arrears, and a prospect of the dreadful reckoning, should *torment them before their time* *.

But if they were informed, that the infinitely merciful SON of GOD, has undertaken to redeem such undone and helpless sinners.—That he has thoroughly expiated the most horrid transgressions, and procured even for ungodly wretches, all the needful supplies of heavenly grace—That, instead of being prohibited, they are *invited* to partake, *freely* to partake, of these unspeakable blessings—Were they acquainted with these glad tidings of the gospel; did they really believe these glad tidings of the gospel; their chains, which now are now like steel and adamant, would become *like a thread of tow, when it touched the fire* †. Yes, my friend; these truths, if once revealed and received in their hearts, would be an infallible method to *make them free* ‡.

What shall I say more, to obtain my Theron's approbation? Shall I point out and plead the most illustrious precedents? GOD the FATHER is well pleased with this righteousness of our REDEEMER. He expresses his complacency by the most emphatical words: *Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth* ||. In CHRIST and his righteousness, GOD is not only pleased, but *delighted*: his very *soul*, every perfection of the GODHEAD, with ineffable satisfaction, rests and acquiesces in them. I said *ineffable*; for he has declared this, in a manner superior to all the force of language, by raising our crucified SURETY from the dead; by exalting him to the Heaven of Heavens; and placing him at his own right-hand in glory.

* Matt. viii. 29.

† Judg. xvi. 9.

‡ John viii. 32.

|| Isai. xlii. 1.

Our LORD JESUS CHRIST is well pleased. He esteems it his honor to shine forth as the everlasting righteousness of his people. It is the brightest jewel of his mediatorial crown. In this he *sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied*. Accounting himself fully recompensed, for all the labours of his life, and all the sorrows of his death, when sinners are washed from their guilt in his blood, and presented faultless by his obedience.

The HOLY SPIRIT is equally pleased with this great transaction, and its matchless effects. It is his peculiar office, and favorite employ, to *convince* the world of their SAVIOUR's righteousness. Not only that his nature was spotlessly pure, and his conversation perfectly holy; but that from both results a righteousness, of infinite dignity, and everlasting efficacy: sufficient, throughout all ages sufficient, to procure acceptance and salvation for the most unworthy creatures.

Since then, this method of acceptance and salvation, is excellent and glorious, in the adorable TRINITY—Since it magnifies the law, and yields the most exalted honor to its divine AUTHOR—Since it makes ample provision for the holiness of a *corrupt*, and the happiness of a *ruined* world—Why should my friend any longer dislike it; oppose it; or treat it with a cold indifference? Surely, all these grand recommendations, are enough to over-rule any little objections, which may arise from the suspicions of timidity, or may be started by the artifices of sophistry.

Ther. I know not how it is, Aspasio; but I cannot reconcile myself to this doctrine of imputed righteousness; notwithstanding all the pains you have taken, to make me a convert.

Asp. The disappointment is mine, but the loss is yours, Theron.—However, let me entreat you, not to reject my sentiments absolutely, nor to condemn them prematurely. Suppose it possible at least, that they *may be true*; and weigh them in even balance.—Learn wisdom from your Aspasio's folly. I was once exactly in your situation; saw things in your light, and through your medium.

Conversing, I well remember, with a devout but plain person, our discourse happened to turn upon that solemn

admonition; *If any man will come after ME, let him deny himself.* I was arranging upon the import and extent of the duty. Shewing, that merely to forbear the infamous action, is little. We must deny admittance, deny entertainment at least, to the evil *imagination*; and quench even the enkindling spark of irregular desire. When I had shot a random bolt, my honest friend replied; "there is another instance of self-denial, to which this injunction extends, and which is of very great moment in the christian religion. I mean, the instance of renouncing our own strength, and our own righteousness; not leaning on *that*, for holiness; not relying on *this* for justification."—I thought the old man, I must confess, little better than a superstitious dotard; and wondered at (what I then fancied) the motley mixture of piety and oddity in his notions. But now I discern sense, solidity, and truth in his observation*. Now I perceive, that we ourselves are often the dreamers, when we imagine others to be fast asleep.

Ther. You have no reason to be ashamed, Aspasio, of receiving instruction from your honest counsellor. For you know, it was observed by the antients, and is now passed into a maxim. Neither need you suspect, that I shall forget or disregard your caution, relating to a precipitate determination of my judgement. No; I shall endeavour to avoid the rock, on which my friend struck; but happily, it seems, escaped shipwreck.—You may likewise assure yourself that, upon a subject of such exceeding great, of eternal consequence, I shall not fail to use the most attentive and impartial consideration. An indolent supineness, or a *bigotted* obstinacy, in this great crisis of affairs, would be of all errors the most inexcusable, and must prove of all miscarriages the most fatal.

* Milton thought the same, otherwise he would never have put those words into the mouth of a divine Speaker.

—Thy merit,

Imputed shall absolve them, who renounce
Their own, both righteous and unrighteous, deeds:
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life.

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Asp. But still you cannot reconcile yourself—And no wonder. For this way of salvation runs directly counter to the stream of corrupt nature. It puzzles our reason, and offends our pride.—“What? shall we not work, but *believe unto righteousness* *? Shall we receive all *freely*, and reckon ourselves no better than unprofitable servants! Having nothing, nothing whatsoever, that may recommend us to “our Maker!”—This is a method, to which we should never submit; this is a proposal, which we should always spurn; were not our natural sentiments rectified, and our high imaginations abased, by the power of grace.

Let me remind you of a little incident, which you must have read in the *Grecian* history. A certain stranger came, one day, to dine with some *Lacedemonians*; who always sat down at a public table, and were content with the plainest food. The gentleman, accustomed to higher eating, could not forbear expressing his disgust, at the *homely* provision.—Sir, said the cook, you don’t make use of the *sauce*.—What do you mean? replied the guest.—You don’t use hard exercise; nor habituate yourself to long abstinence; nor bring a sharpened appetite to the meal.—And you, my dear friend, I am apprehensive, have not the *sauce*; have not the proper preparative for this salutary doctrine; which is indeed the bread of life, and the very marrow of the gospel.

Ther. What preparative? Did you not just now say, that all was free; and nothing needful, but only to receive the blessing?

Asp. True; nothing is needful, as inclining GOD to give; but only as inclining us to receive.—Would you seek, would you solicit, would you so much as accept, a pardon from your sovereign; unless you stood convicted of some capital crime, or was apparently liable to condemnation? Neither will sinful man seek, nor accept the great atonement, till he is made sensible, that the wrath of GOD and the damnation of hell, are what he justly deserves; and what

* Rom. x. 40.

without the propitiation of CHRIST, he must unavoidably suffer.

This then is the preparative—A sense of the horrible filthiness of the least sin in the sight of GOD; of the innumerable sins of our heart and life; and of our undone damnable state on this account.—While *destitute* of these convictions, our souls will be like the full stomach, that lothes even the honey-combs.—So long as these convictions are *slight*, and *hover* only in the imagination; we shall be like *Galio**, listless, indifferent, and *caring for none of these things*.—But when they are *deep*, and *penetrate* the heart, then the righteousness of a REDEEMER will be sweet, tasteful, and inviting. Sweet as myrrh and frankincense to the smell; tasteful as milk and honey to the palate; inviting, as gold and treasures to the ruined bankrupt.

Ther. How are these convictions wrought in the soul?

Asp. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Consequently, by the law is the conviction of our undone state. Let us therefore endeavour to understand the law of GOD: how pure, how extensive, how sublimely perfect it is.—Then, judge of our spiritual condition, not from the *flattering* suggestions of self-love, nor from the *defective* examples of our fellow-creatures, but by this *unerring* standard of the sanctuary.—Above all, let us beseech the GOD and FATHER of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to send his enlightening SPIRIT into our hearts. For indeed, without the enlightening influences of the SPIRIT, we may have the divine law in our hand; we may comprehend its grammatical meaning; yet be like blind *Bartimeus* under the meridian sun. It is the blessed SPIRIT alone, who can rend the veil of ignorance from our minds; and shew us, either “the wonderful things of GOD’s law,” or the glorious mysteries of his gospel. In this sense, our polite Poet † speaks a truth, as singularly important, as it is elegantly expressed:

* Acts xviii. 12. A late commentator, of distinguished eminence, has attempted to vindicate Galio’s conduct; and would represent it, as an amiable instance of prudence and moderation.

† Mr. Pope, in his charming Poem, entitled “The Messiah.”

He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eye-balls pour the day.

Will you give me leave to propose another expedient? Which, I believe, may be considerably serviceable in this particular case. Which, I am assured, will be greatly advantageous in many other respects.

Ther. Backward as I am to adopt your doctrine, I am no enemy to my own interest. Therefore, shall not only give you leave to propose, but give you thanks for communicating, so valuable an advice.

Asp. It is, in reality, none of mine. It was long ago recommended by your old acquaintance, *Horace*. It consists in *keeping a diary*.

Compile a secret history of your heart and conduct.—Take notice of the manner, in which your *time* is spent; and of the strain, which runs through your discourse. How often the former is lost in trifles, how often the latter evaporates in vanity.—Attend to the principle from which your actions flow; whether from the steady habitual love of GOD, or from some rambling impulse, and a customary propensity to please yourself:—Minute down your sins of omission. How frequently you neglect to glorify your CREATOR; to edify your fellow-creatures; and to improve yourself in knowledge and holiness.—Observe the frame of your spirit in *religious* duties. With what reluctance they are undertaken, and with what indevotion performed; with how many wanderings of thought, and how much dullness of desire.—How often, in transacting common affairs, you feel the inordinate sallies of passion, the workings of evil concupiscence, or the intrusion of foolish imaginations.

Register those *secret* faults, to which none but your own conscience is privy, and which none but the all-seeing eye discerns.—Often review these interesting memoirs. Frequently contemplate yourself in this faithful mirror. And don't be afraid, to see your wants and weaknesses, depravity of your heart, and the iniquity of your life.—An artist sometime ago, took a *survey* of your estate. Drew the form, and measured the dimensions, of each inclosure.

Picture out every hedge, and scarce omitted a single tree, which grew upon the premises.—Act thus with your will, your understanding, your affections. These are your noble *internal Demesne*. Of which none but yourself can be a competent surveyor.

Ther. It is unreasonable and preposterous, I must acknowledge, to be minutely exact in meaner matters, and to use no accuracy of inspection in the most momentous affairs. To have a correct draught of our lands, which are a *transient* inheritance; and no map of that *everlasting* possession, the soul.

Asp. Gratify me then, my dear Theron, in this particular. As I purpose to set out very early in the morning, I shall insist upon it; that you do not rise before your usual time in order to compliment my departure. But I now make it my *last* wish, and my *parting* request, that you will, for some months at least, keep a diary.

You have wondered at my opinion, concerning the corruption of nature, and the insufficiency of our righteousness. This may seem strange, this may appear shocking, to a mind *unacquainted* with itself. But, when you have searched your heart, by this probe; when you have felt the pulse of your soul, by self-examination: then you will be better able to judge of sentiments, and enter into the reasons of my faith.

By this means, we shall also discover the sins, which most easily beset us; which most frequently elude our vigilance, and baffle our resolution. We shall learn, *how* to post our guard; *when* to exercise the strictest watch; and *where* to direct the artillery of prayer.—In a word; We shall learn better than from ten thousand volumes, to **KNOW OURSELVES**. A knowledge, which was supposed, by the ancient philosophers, to descend from heaven; and which I believe, our *christian* divines will allow, has a happy tendency to lead people thither. Because, of all other preparatives, it best disposes them for that blessed **REDEEMER**, who is the way, the only way to those blissful mansions.

Now I have mentioned a way, let me suppose you traveling

through an unknown country. You come to a place, where the road divides itself into two equally inviting parts. You are at a loss, which track to pursue. Whose direction will you choose to follow? That man's, who has passed through one of them only? Or that man's, who has passed and rested them *both*?—To wait for an answer, would be an affront to your judgement. Only let me observe that the last is your Aspasio's case. He has traveled long, and proceeded far, even in *your* path. All that circumspection and assiduity; all, that prayer and self-denial; all, that fasting and alms, and every other means of grace could do; in order to establish a righteousness of his own, has been done. But to no purpose.—He has also trod every step in the way, which he recommends to his beloved friend. He has made the trial, concerning the righteousness, *without works*, or the righteousness of GOD imputed. He can set his *Probatum est*, to whatever he advises on this subject; and may venture to say, with his divine MASTER, *we speak that we do know**, and testify that we have experienced.

Ther. I am sorry to observe, that the night is coming on and our conversation almost at an end. My regret is increased, by the consideration of your intended journey.—Though business obliges you to *depart*; it will, I hope, afford you leisure to write. This will be some compensation for the want of your company.

Yonder is sinking below the horizon, and just taking his leave of our earth. To retard the departing radiance, at least to alleviate the approaching loss, those western clouds catch the rays; and reflect them to our view, in a most amusing diversity of colours. By this means, we enjoy the great luminary in his beams, even when *his orb* is withdrawn from our sight.—An epistolary correspondence has something of the same nature. Letters may be called, the talk of absent friends. By this expedient, they communicate their thoughts, even though countries, kingdoms, or seas intercept their speech. You must, therefore, promise me this satisfaction. That I may converse with my Aspasio by the *pen*,

when I can no longer have an intercourse with him in person.

Asp. You have anticipated me, Theron. Otherwise, what is now my promise, would have been my request.

I cannot but take notice of another particularity, in that magnificent assemblage of clouds. How they varied their appearance, as the lamp of day changed its situation.—A little while ago, those curtains of the sky, were streaked with orange or tinged with amber. Presently, they borrow the blush of the rose, or the softened red of the pink. Ere long, they glow with vermillion, or deepen into crimson. Soon succeeds the purple, more beautiful and grand than any imperial robe; and as soon (thus transient is all sublunary grandeur!) gives place to the *sable veil* of evening, or saddens into the *gloomy pall* of night.—Such, I trust, will be the issue of my Theron's present apprehensions. All his splendid ideas of human excellency and self-righteousness, will become faint; will lose their imaginary lustre; till, at length, they fade away, and darken into absolute *self-abasement*.—Then, the grace of free justification, will be amiable, will be desirable, as the beauties of the dawn, breaking upon the shades of night. Then, you will make no difficulty, to say with the Psalmist and with the Apostle; *Blessed is the man, unto whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works* *.



SERIES LETTERS.

LETTER I.



ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,

I AM now at the seat of my worthy friend *Camillus* ; where business and inclination will fix me for some weeks.—This evening we had a most pleasant ramble. I have met with nothing so agreeable, since I left your house, and lost your company

The time was just arrived, and the scene was fully opened, which furnished our great Poet with his fine description :

Now was the sun in western cadence low,
From noon ; and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the earth now wak'd, and usher in
The evening cool.

At this juncture, *Camillus* invited me to take the air.—We walked several times, along a close shady alley, arched with the foliage of *filberts*. Here, hid from every eye, and the whole world withdrawn from our view, we seemed like *Monks* strolling in their cloysters.—Turning short at the end, we enter a parallel range of majestic and uniformly spread-

ing *walnut-trees*. This transition, was somewhat like advancing, through a low porch, into the isles of a magnificent *cathedral*. The broad leaf, and large trunk, of those lordly trees.—their very diffusive spread, added to their prodigious height—give them an air of uncommon dignity. It swells the imagination with vast ideas, and entertains us with a romantic kind of delight, to expiate amidst such huge columns, and under such superb elevations, of living architecture.

Quitting our cathedral, we turn once again, and pass into a grand colonade of *oaks*: so regular in their situation, so similar in their size, and so remarkably correspondent in every circumstance, that they looked like the twins of nature; not only belonging to the same family, but produced at the same birth. Through these lay a walk, strait, spacious, and gracefully long. Far exceeding the last in the extent of its area, though much inferior in the stateliness of its cieling. It put me in mind of that divine benignity, which has allowed us the space of six days, for the prosecution of our own comparatively low affairs; and set apart but *one* in seven, for the more immediate attendance on the sublime duty of worshipping our CREATOR.

This walk was covered with the neatest gravel; and not a weed to be seen, nor one blade of grass, through the whole extended surface. It stole into a continual ascent; yet so very gradually, that the rise was scarce discernable, either by the searching eye, the toiling feet, or the panting breath.—At the extremity, a handsome *summer-house* shewed a flight of steps, and half a *Venetian* door. The rest of the building was hid by the low-hung clustering branches.

As soon as we entered the apartment, *Camillus* threw open the left-hand sash; and, with it, a most enlarged and amusing prospect.—The structure appeared situate on the brow of a considerable eminence. Whose sides were partly confused and wild with broken rocks, partly shagged and perplexed with thorny shrubs. The spectator is agreeably surprised, to find himself accommodated with so *elegant* a mansion; on the summit of so *rude* and *ruinous* a spot.—But how greatly is his surprise and his satisfaction augmented, when he casts his eye forward; and beholds the beauti-

ful meads, which, from the foot of this ragged hill, stretch themselves into a space almost unmeasurable!

Through the midst of this extensive vale, which was decked with the finest verdure, and replenished with the richest herbage, a *river* rolled its copious flood. Rolled, in a thousand serpentine *meanders*; as though it was loth to leave the flowery scene; and made repeated efforts to prolong its stay amidst such lovely objects.—Till, at last, having loitered in its own labyrinth, and wandered more than twice the length * of the meadows; having held a mirror to the aspiring poplars, and bending willows: having paid a welcome salute to several ornamented *villas*, and passed through the arches of two or three curiously pendent bridges; it seemed to meet the sky, and mingle with the horizon.

Opposite to the front window, a *cascade* fell from the adjacent stream. It flashed and foamed along the broad slope, indented with small pits, and jagged with protuberant stones. The current, vexed and embarrassed, seemed to rave at the intervening obstacles; and forcing its rapid, indignant, sonorous way, struck the ear with a peal of liquid thunder. These fretful waters—let our *angry* passions observe the admonition, and follow the example—soon forgot their rage; soon recovered their temper. Collected into a little rivulet, they ran off in calm and silent lapse, till they lost themselves amongst beds of osier, and plantations of alder.

The river, widening as it flowed, was parted here and there by several little islands. Scattered, as it were by the hand of chance; and raising their green heads in the midst of the lucid stream; they presented a most unexpected and most pleasing spectacle. Some of them were tufted with reeds, and surrounded with rocks and shoals, the unmolested resort of swanns. Some adorned with stately *porticos*, and *alcoves*; the graceful retreats of rural pleasure. One, larger than the rest, seemed to be furnished with cool embow-

* The river Ouse in Bedfordshire, by its multiplied windings, makes a space of eight miles by land, more than eighty by water.

ering walks ; fitted for studious retirement, or sedate contemplation.—On either side of the charming valley, towns and villages lay thick, and looked gay ; adding ornament and variety to the scene, and receiving innumerable advantages from the passing wave.

The whole recalled to an attentive observer's mind, that amiable and august spectacle, the *Syrian* * soothsayer could not behold, without a rapture of delight ;—*From the top of the rocks I see the tribes of JEHIOVAH, and from the hills I behold the habitation of his chosen people. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob ! and thy tabernacles, O Israel ! As the vallies, are they spread forth ; as gardens, by the river's side : as trees of exquisite fragrance †, which the LORD hath planted ; as cedars of stateliest growth, flourishing beside the waters.*

We had but just looked about us, when a messenger came for *Camillus*. As he was called to settle some private affairs, I chose to stay in this inviting retreat ; and determined to to make myself amends for the loss of *Camilla's* company, by beginning a correspondence with my *Theron*.—We have pen, ink and paper, in all our rural retirement ; that, if any thing is started in discourse, or occurs in meditation, worthy to be remembered, it may immediately be committed to writing.

I could not but observe to my friend, that, fine as the prospect appeared, there was one decoration wanting ; if some *grand deformity* may be called a decoration. The ridges of a bleak and barren mountain, or the skirts of a sun-burnt tawny heath, would give *additional liveliness*, to the ornamented part of a landscape. Thus contrasted, their beauties would acquire a new charm, and strike with double vigour.—This circumstance would shew us what wretched abodes, and inhospitable quarters might have fallen to our share. And would probably awaken a more fervent gratitude to the Supreme DISPOSER of things ; who has cast *our* " Lot in " a fairer ground, and given " us a more goodly heri-
" tage."

* Numb. xxiii. 7. † Numb. xxiv. 6, 6.

. So a proper knowledge of the divine *law*—of its sublime perfections, and rigorous sanction—joined with a conviction of our extreme deficiency, and manifold transgressions—all this would endear the blessed JESUS to our affections, and powerfully recommend his righteousness to our desires.—The remainder of this epistle, therefore, shall turn upon some instances of duty, enjoined in that sacred system.* *By which* it may be highly useful to examine our conduct, and sift our hearts: *in which*, I believe, we have all fallen short, and are all become guilty: *from which*, we may learn the imperfection of our best services, and see the inexpressible need of a better righteousness than our own.

The knowledge of GOD is the foundation of all vital religion, and indeed is the consummation of human happiness. It is not only matter of present duty, but the very essence of our future bliss; *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent* *.—Yet, important and obligatory as it is, are we not very defective in this divine science? Have we duly acquainted ourselves with the marvellous excellencies of the LORD JEHOVAH? His uncountrollable power, and all comprehending wisdom; his unbounded goodness, and unwearied patience; his immaculate holiness, and inflexible justice; his never-failing faithfulness, and inviolable veracity?—Have we, according to the direction of our *inspired* tutor, pursued this sacred study on our knees†; and sought this most noble of all intellectual endowments, not merely from books, but principally at the throne of grace. Have we sought it, like that ancient *Jewish* student, with an early application, and with incessant assiduity; even “from the flower till the grape was ripe? ‡”

Is that scanty ray of knowledge, which perhaps has forced itself through our original darkness, *operative* on our affections? Have we loved the LORD our GOD with all

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John xvii. 3. † James i. 5.

‡ Eccles. li. 16.

our heart? This is the first and great commandment *.—Have we constantly entertained the most magnificent and honorable thoughts of his sublime perfections? Is our esteem for this immensely great and most blessed BEING, high, superlative, matchless? Somewhat like *that*, expressed by the Psalmist; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth, that I desire in comparison of thee* †.—Have we been affectionately concerned for his glory, and zealous to advance his holy religion? Troubled, very sensibly touched, when our MAKER's honor has been trampled in the dust, by licentious tongues, or flagitious deeds?

Have we made it our ruling care, to approve the whole of our life, and the most secret transactions of our breast, to his all-seeing eye?—Resolved, deliberately resolved to sacrifice, not only our darling lusts, but even our most valuable interests, whenever they stand in competition with the good pleasure of his will? In a word; as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, with such *vehement* and *inextinguishable* ardor, have we thirsted after—a brighter manifestation of his divine attributes—some sweeter assurances of his special love—and an ever-increasing conformity to his holy image?

Such was the temper of those excellent men, who are characterized in the scriptures of truth, as children of the HIGHEST, and patterns for our imitation. This is their language; *The desire of our soul is unto thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early* ‡—Neither is such warmth of love, and fervour of desire, any needless or extravagant pitch of devotion; but a *reasonable* service, indispensibly due, from all intelligent creatures, to the great AUTHOR of their being—in whom all possible perfections, with the utmost exaltation and dignity, reside—from whom all manner of blessings, in the most copious and never-failing communications, flow.

When we receive, from an absent *friend*, rich and repeated presents; casks of generous wine, or jars of delici

* Matt. xviii 38.

† Psal. lxxviii. 25.

‡ Isai xvi. 8, 9.

ous fruit ; we feel ourselves enkindled into a grateful affection. We honor, we love the person, who allows us such a distinguished place in his heart ; and expresses his cordial regard, by such a series of active and tender benevolence. —The blessed GOD is a friend to us all, infinitely powerful, and equally munificent. We are the constant objects of his more than friendly, of his parental cares. Every passing moment is a messenger of his patience, and charged with some token of his bounty. For *our* sake, he has diffused blessings over all the face of the earth ; and commanded every element to concur, in ministering to our accommodation. He has not only adapted his benefits to our several wants ; but has given them a *diversification*, large as the scope of our wishes ; and an *enrichment*, far beyond all that our fancy could conceive.—Profuse liberality ! yet small and scanty, compared with his most adorable benignity in CHRIST JESUS.

What ? If GOD, willing to manifest the superabundant riches of his kindness, had made bare the arm of his omnipotence ; and struck a most miraculous road through the surges of the ocean, to afford us a safe passage ?—If, to accommodate us in our travels, he had brought waters out of the flinty rock ; and bid the ravens bring meat to our hands, bids the winds convey manna to our doors ?—If, to furnish us with a commodious settlement, he had dethroned mighty kings, dispossessed populous nations, and made the walls of impregnable cities fall to the ground ?—If, to further the dispatch of our business, or facilitate the conquest of our enemies, he had arrested the sun in his meridian career, and laid an embargo upon the moon, setting out on her nightly tour ?—In short, if to promote our welfare, he has suspended the powers, and controuled the laws of universal nature ; had wrought *all* the miracles, exhibited in the land of *Egypt*, or recorded in the volumes of inspiration—Should we not think ourselves under the most inviolable engagements, to love the LORD our GOD, *who hath done so great things for us* ; to love him unfeignedly and ardently ; to love him with a supreme affection, far above every other amiable object ?—Yet, we have greater, incomparably greater obligations to our Almighty BENEFactor. For (hear

O heavens! wonder O earth! and let eternity dwell upon the stupendous truth!) *GOD spared not his SON*—his transcendently glorious and divinely excellent *SON*—*but delivered him up* to the deepest humiliation, and to the most accursed death, *for us men and our salvation.*

O, Theron! Have we been impressed with *wonder*, at the contemplation of this goodness? Have our hearts glowed with *gratitude*, under a sense of these mercies? Surely, no man need be convicted of any other crime, at the great tribunal, than insensibility of such love, and ingratitude for such favours. This, without the accession of horrid impities is enough to leave him absolutely inexcusable. This is enough to prove him one of the most *disingenuous*, and most *detestable* of creatures.

Have we exercised ourselves in frequent *thanksgiving*? Many are the exhortations to this honorable duty. *Praise thy GOD, O Simon**; *Praise him for his mighty acts*†. *Praise him according to his excellent greatness.*—Innumerable are the incitements to abound in this pleasant service. Every comfort has a voice, and cries in the ears of reason; O! *that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness.* Every deliverance enforces the address, and furnishes fresh materials for the heavenly employ. The man after GOD's own heart declares, as an inviting example for our practice; *I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth*‡: *Yea as long as I have any being, I will sing praise unto my GOD*§.—Indeed, when we consider the inexhaustibly rich bounty of GOD our CREATOR, and the inconceivably tender mercy of GOD our REDEEMER, it is both strange and deplorable that the love of GOD is not always prevailing in our hearts, and the language of praise ever flowing from our lips.

I will not suppose our character so irreligious, that we have neglected the daily worship of GOD, either in our closet, or in our family.—But, have we prayed with that

* Psal. cxlviii, 10.

† Psal. cli. 2.

‡ Psal. xxxiv, 1.

§ Psal. cxlvi. 3.

profound *reverential awe*, which is due to the **HIGH** and **LOFTY ONE** *who inhabiteth eternity*?—Have we made our supplications with that *fervent importunity*, which may in some measure correspond with the extreme indigence of our state, and the invaluable worth of thy blessings we crave?—Have our petitions been attended with that *steady affiance* which may glorify the goodness, the power the veracity of the **LORD**? May evidently declare, that *he is rich in mercy, to all that call upon him* * : that *he is the LORD JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength* † : that *he is the GOD of truth, and faithful for ever* ‡. We call him **FATHER** : but have we trusted in him, with that unsuspecting, cheerful, filial confidence, when a child reposes on the fidelity and indulgence of such an earthly relative? Have we not entertained, too often entertained narrow, dishonorable, beggarly apprehensions, concerning the treasures of his liberality, and the bowels of his pity? Rating them even lower than our parent's, our friend's, or our own.

Have we been careful to carry the spirit of our prayers into our *ordinary* conversation ; and waited at the door, as well as approached to the throne of grace?—Amidst the intervals of our solemn devotions, have we cultivated an *ejaculatory* intercourse with heaven? How highly would the ambitious courtier *prize*, and how frequently would he *use* a privy key, which should give him, at all hours, free admittance to his sovereign. This key of admittance, only to an infinitely more exalted **POTENTATE**, we all possess in the practice of mental aspirations to **GOD**.—It is certainly the noblest employ, and will be the richest improvement of our thoughts, to send them in such short embassies to the **KING of Kings** ; and to derive, by such occasional sallies of faith, a renewed supply from the fountain of all good. How great a *loss* then must it be to our spiritual interests, and how contemptuous a *disregard* of the ever-present **JEHOVAH**, to omit entirely, or long to discontinue this *most*

Rom. x. 12.

† Isai. xxvi. 4.

‡ Deut. xxxii. 4.

beneficial practice of habitual adoration? —Can you, my dear Theron, acquit yourself on this article of enquiry? Has not every day of your life been a day of negligence in this respect? Been a perpetual disobedience to our SAVIOUR's injunction; *men ought, in this manner, always to pray, and not to faint* §.

Have we sanctified the *Sabbath*? Has the LORD's day, with all its solemn and sacred offices, been our delight? —Have we remembered that distinguished portion of our time, as *Jacob* remembered the delightful interview at *Peniel*? Have we expected it, as merchants expect the arrival of a richly laden vessel? Have we improved it, as husbandmen improve the shining hours of the harvest? —Have we wholly laid aside every earthly engagement; *not speaking our own words* *, nor allowing ourselves in any gratifications, which may interrupt our communion with the FATHER of spirits? Has *one day in his courts been preferable to a thousand* †, spent either in the works of our calling, or in the scenes of recreation? —Have the memorials of our REDEEMER's dying merits, and the seals of his unchangeable loving-kindness, being relished as a feast, and prized as a portion?

Have we honored GOD's holy word? —What greater mark of disesteem, than to despise a person's discourse; and not to think his speech worthy of our notice? Especially, when he addresses us with a very great seriousness, and with the utmost affection. In our Bible, the GOD of glory speaks to his creatures; speaks with the most persuasive energy, and with all the yearnings of parental tenderness. Have we listened to our CREATOR, with reverence and delight; and rejoiced with trembling at—*Thus saith the LORD*?

Have we searched the oracles of truth, not merely as *scholars*, but as *sinner*s; not from a spirit of curiosity, or with an air of formality, but with a solicitude and ardor,

§ Luke xviii. 1.

* Isai. lviii. 13.

† Psal. lxxxiv. 10.

becoming persons who enquire after the SAVIOUR of their lost souls? Have we submitted our inmost thoughts to their impartial scrutiny; to receive conviction of sin from their awful remonstrances, and to hear the sentence of condemnation at their righteous bar?—Have we been willing to suffer the reproach of *conscious baseness*, while they have ripped up the disguises of falshood; laid open our secret iniquities; and brought all our evil ways to remembrance? Thus *Josiah* acted. *His heart was tender, and he humbleth himself before the LORD; he rent his clothes, and wept before the LORD; when he heard the words of the book of the law* *.

Have we hid the glad tidings of the gospel, within our hearts? Have we been diligent to suck this *honeycomb* † of grace, by concomitant meditation, and subsequent prayer?—Have we valued the precious promises, as gentlemen of wealth value the writings of their private estates; or as enfranchised bodies esteem the charter of their public privileges? Have we, like the princely patriarch, longed for those words of *edification, exhortation, and comfort*, more than for our necessary food ‡? And, like the royal Prophet, prevented the night watches, that we may be occupied in those statutes § and ordinances of heaven?

We have hitherto confined the examination, to a few instances of the *affirmative* kind; how dreadfully will the dark account be swelled, it, instead of love and obedience, there be hatred and opposition—*hatred* of that name, glory, and worship of GOD—*opposition* to his interest, kingdom, and service!

GOD *is infinite perfection*: worthy of all admiration: exalted above all; raise. Yet do not our thoughts more frequently, or more naturally turn upon our own accomplishments, than upon the illustrious and shining attributes of the ALMIGHTY? This is, in itself, the most shameful *dotage*, and in GOD's sight, the most abominable *idolatry*.

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.

† Cant v. 1.

‡ Job xxiii. 12.

§ Psal. cxix. 148

Yet, let us observe, and we shall probably find, that, as damps arise in the mines, or fogs in the fenny grounds, so naturally, and so copiously do these-admiring reflections arise in our depraved minds.

GOD is an *everlasting King*. Have we not often resisted his authority, by open disobedience; often disputed it by secret murmuring? Have we not, as far as in us lay, deposed the omnipotent SOVEREIGN, and exalted *self* into the throne? Made *self* will our law, and *self*-pleasing our end? Thus adding sacrilege to rebellion?

GOD is transcendently *gracious* and *amiable*.—Amiable as he is, have we not too often scorned him from our affections, by being *lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of GOD**? Gracious as he is, have we not too long turned our backs upon him, by forgetting his benefits; being insensible of his presence; and not having so much as a real desire to serve or glorify him? O! how common, yet how heinous, is this iniquity! It is a total departure from the great end of our existence. It renders our whole life one continual sin. Nay, it is a complication of sins; it is *every* transgression in embryo. What is the stubbornness of caressed children, and the negligence of entrusted servants? What is the indifference and disdain of obliged dependants? What the deceit and treachery of chosen favourites? Is not each of these practices, odious, vile, provoking? Yet they are all included in that one grand evil, an habitual forgetfulness of the blessed GOD.

Awake conscience! Summoned and charged as thou art, in behalf of the Supreme LORD, bear an impartial testimony. Then I am persuaded, the Pharisee in our breasts, like the man unfurnished with the wedding-garment, must be speechless and confounded; must stand self-convicted and self-condemned.

Is our heart warm with *brotherly love*?—Good-manners will put expressions of civility into our mouths; but has a power from on high implanted the royal law of charity in our breasts? The character of a gentleman requires a de-

* 2 Tim. iii. 4.

portment accessible, obliging, and courteous :——has the spirit of christianity taught us to love, *not in a word or plausible appearance only, but in deed and in truth* * ?——Do we love our neighbours, not merely on account of some relation they bear us, or some service they have done us ? But, because they are creatures of the blessed GOD ; are the objects of his providential care ; and capable at least of being conformed to his image ? Do we love them, because we hope, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST has bought them with his blood ; and has made, or will make them partakers of his SPIRIT, and members of his mystical body ?

Are we sincerely concerned for their credit and interest ; for their present welfare, and eternal happiness ? Do we embrace all opportunities of promoting, both the one, and the other ? Embrace them with the *same* alacrity, and improve them with the same zeal, which actuate us in pursuing *our own* felicity ?——If they exceed us in all that is amiable, and all that is prosperous, do we contemplate their superior excellence with a real complacency, and their more abundant success with a real satisfaction ? Is *selfishness*, that exorbitant encroacher, kept within bounds ; and do we *seek, not barely our own, but another's wealth* ?

Do we dislike to hear, and abhor to spread, defamatory tales ; even when our adversaries are the men, whom they tend to blacken ?——When rudely affronted, or carelessly abused, do we pity the offenders, for the wrong done to their souls ; rather than kindle into resentment, at the *indignity* offered to ourselves ?——When greatly injured, are we much more willing to be reconciled, than to foment displeasure, and prosecute revenge ? In a word ; do we *love our enemies ; bless them, that curse us ; do good to them, that hate us : and pray for them, which despitefully use us, and persecute us* † ?——Without this loving and lovely disposition, *we abide*, says the Apostle, *in death* ‡ ; are destitute of spiritual, and have no fitness for eternal life.

R

* John iii. 18.

† Matt. v. 44.

‡ 1 John, iii. 14.

Let me add—are all our graces, and all our works, clothed with humility? This should be the dress, in which they severally appear; as well as the bond of connection, which unites them all*.—Do we maintain a very low opinion of our own accomplishments, and in *honor prefer others to ourselves* †? Habitually sensible, that we are less than the least of the divine mercies, and the very chiefest of sinners.

I might easily have branched out all the preceding subjects, into a much greater variety of interrogatory articles. But I intend only to present you with a specimen. Your own meditations will enlarge the sketch, and supply what is defective.—Only let me beg of you, my dear friend, to try your state by this touchstone; to prove your conduct by this standard. And may the FATHER of lights give you an understanding, to discern the exact purity and sublime perfection of his holy law.

Have you lived in the *uninterrupted* observance of all these duties: avoiding whatever is forbidden, and obeying whatever is commanded? Your outward behaviour, I know, has been free from notorious violations; but has your inward temper been preserved, from all ungodly motions, and from every irregular desire? Is there no enmity in your heart to any of the precepts; nor any backwardness, nor any failure, in performing each and every injunction?

When you put these questions to yourself, remember; that every sin is a contempt of infinite majesty, and supreme authority. That every sin pollutes the soul, and renders it a kind of hell; is a departure from GOD, and an imitation of the devil. That the wages due to every sin, is eternal death; and the doom denounced on every sinner, is an everlasting curse.—Remember; that if you fail in *one* point, or in *any* degree, you are guilty of all ‡. Nay; if your conformity be not *persevering* as well as *perfect*, you incur the penalty, and are abandoned to condemnation—UNLESS, renouncing all your *personal* performances, you place your whole affiance on a SAVIOUR's righteousness.—I think, you will

* Pet. v. 6.

† Rom. xii. 10.

‡ James ii. 10. Gal. iii. 10.

not dare to put the issue of your everlasting state upon the former footing. Which is not only hazardous, but must be inevitably ruinous. You will infinitely rather, choose to acknowledge yourself a poor insolvent; and plead the unsearchable riches of your REDEEMER's obedience; and rely on the unparalleled merit of your REDEEMER's blood.

To those who believe, the law, though *strict*, is *most terrible*. Because, be its precepts of holiness ever so extensive, they have been most completely fulfilled by their glorious SURETY. Be its penal sanctions ever so rigorous, they have been satisfied to the utmost, by their great MEDIATOR.—Believers, therefore, may make their boast of their adorable SPONSOR. They may *sit under his shadow with great delight* *. While the thunderings of Mount Sinai, and all the terrors of the legal dispensation, tend only to increase and quicken the refreshing sense of their safety. Just as the possessor of a plentiful estate, in some peaceful and prosperous country, reposes himself under the shade of his vine, or the shelter of his fig-tree; and, hearing of the wars which embroil, or the *plagues* which depopulate other nations, tastes, with augmented relish, his own felicity.

Let me close with the affectionate and emphatical wish of an inspired epistolary writer. *That the Lord of peace may give my dear Theron peace—always—by all means* † ! Then I shall think, my wishes are accomplishing, and this blessing is at the door, when he sees the purity of the divine law—sees the *depravity* of his own nature—and the *impossibility* of being justified, without an interest in the great MEDIATOR's righteousness. That righteousness, which as it is the only hope, and the constant joy, is therefore the darling theme of

Your ever faithful

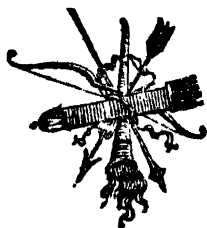
ASPASIO.

P. S. Shall I abridge the preceding letter, and contract the whole into those two great commandments, which made

* Cant. ii. 3.

† 2 Thess. iii. 16.

the first awakening impressions on my own mind? *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart ; t hou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*—Amazing ! said your Aspasio, Are *these* the commands of GOD? As obligatory; as the prohibition of adultery, or the observation of the sabbath? Then has my whole life been a *continual act* of disobedience. Not a day, nor an hour, in which I have performed my duty.—His conviction struck me, as the hand-writing upon the wall struck the presumptuous monarch.—It pursued me, as *Saul* pursued the *christians*, not only to my own house, but even to distant cities. Nor ever gave up the great controversy, till, under the influencies of the SPIRIT, it brought me *weary and heavy laden* to JESUS CHRIST.





LETTER II.



THERON TO ASPASIO.

DEAR ASPASIO,

MORE than three weeks are elapsed, since you favored me with your improving company. During which interval, I have frequently recollected the most material parts of our late discourses. I have carefully considered, both the doctrines you have advanced, and the answers you returned to my several objections.—I have often reviewed your valuable letter; have used it as a touchstone, to examine my state; and have, with great punctuality, observed your parting advice. I have sat, every evening, for a picture of my mind; and have endeavoured to take a true unflattering draught of all its distinguishing qualities. And if the diary is a faithful mirror, if it does not aggravate the deformity of my features, I shall be absolutely out of conceit with myself: I shall ever entertain the meanest opinion of my own, either moral or religious qualifications.

Where is that intense and supreme love of GOD which his transcendent perfections challenge, and his ineffable goodness claims?—Where that firm and joyful *reliance* on CHRIST JESUS, in any degree proportioned to his infinite merits and inviolable promises?—Where that cordial and tender affection for my *fellow-christians*, which is due to the servants of a divine REDEEMER; the people whom he ransomed by his agonies, and purchased with his very blood?—Where is the incense of holy contemplation and

refined desire? Where the flame of fervent devotion and ever active zeal? Such as become the living temple of GOD, in which his most immaculate and glorious SPIRIT vouchsafes to reside.—These fundamental graces, like the grand organs in the animal system, should impart health to the soul, and spread the beauty of holiness through all the conversation. But these, alas! far from beating with a vigorous and uniform pulse, hardly leave with life; only just struggle, now and then, with some faint, intermitted, uneven throws.

How seldom do my actions spring from gratitude to the everlasting BENEFACTOR, or aim at the glory of his super-excellent MAJESTY?—In addressing the KING immortal, invisible, how languid are my affections, and how wandering is my attention? How great my unbelief, and how little my reverential awe? I receive innumerable mercies; but where are my returns of correspondent thankfulness? I am visited with many gracious chastisements; but without proper resignation, or due improvement.—Alas for my artless devotions my lifeless virtues, and the multitude of my *refined iniquities!*—Hid behind the mask of outward decency, and some customary forms of religion, I was altogether unacquainted with my spiritual state. I fancied myself *rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing*: even while I was *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* *.

If I look back, and review the years of youth and manhood, what has been the tenour, what is the aspect of my life? More like a desolate and horrid wilderness: than a cultivated garden, or a fruitful vineyard.—In *youth*, what sordid gratifications of appetite! In *manhood*, what base compliances with a wicked world! in *both*, whatsholes of evil inclinations have polluted my heart! What swarms of vain imaginations have debased my thoughts!—What frothy and unprofitable words have dropt from my lips!—By all which, how have I disobeyed, and how dishonored GOD! how have I denied

and how crucified the LORD JESUS CHRIST!—And yet suppose myself, all the while, to be *good enough*!

It is something unaccountable, that a person of my inquisitive disposition, should, through the course of so many years, be such an utter *stranger* to himself. I wonder at my own *preposterous* folly!—To travel into foreign countries, and visit the most renowned cities of *Europe*; yet never step over the threshold, nor look within the apartments of my own breast.—To carry on a correspondence with my friends, even in the remotest nations; and never enter upon a conference, nor hold any intelligence with my own heart!—To enquire after news from the fleet, news from the army, news from the court; yet exercise neither curiosity nor care, with regard to the hope of heaven, and the concerns of eternity!—What egregious misconduct is this! A most pernicious error, in the oeconomy of religious life.

Sometimes, I have cast a transient glance on my *outward* behaviour; but never extended my search to the delinquent, the traitor, the rebel *within*.—And even my outward behaviour has been surveyed, with as much erroneous partiality, as superficial levity. It has been compared, not with that *exact* and *sublime* standard, the scriptures of truth; but, as in the case of the self-deceiving *Pharisee*, with the unjust, extortionate, adulterous practice of some other people. From whence I most unwarrantably concluded, that, being not quite so abandoned as the most profligate creatures, my character must be good, and my condition safe. But, thanks to your last friendly letter, and the searching expedient it recommended, I am now in a different way of thinking.

It is strange to recollect, and indeed it is shameful to confess, the many *artifices* which I have used, to put a *cheat* upon myself.—Sometimes, I have fancied that the divine law could never be so strict, as to condemn us inexorably, only because we continue not in all its precepts.—Sometimes I have pleaded the infirmity of our nature, and endeavoured to make the works of darkness appear only as pitiable failings.—Sometimes I have taken refuge in the excellency of our church, and plumed myself with the borrowed feathers of a religious profession.—At other times, I have soothed my conscience to rest, by a punctuality of attendance on

places, or a zealous attachment to forms. And all this, to seduce, cajole, and betray myself—betray myself, first into a vain conceit of my own endowments; then into a contemptuous disregard of CHRIST; and at last into eternal destruction.—But now I see my guilt; I apprehend my danger; and feel my helpless condition.

Indeed, my Aspasio, I am now convinced, that the darkest colours cannot be too dark, for the pourtrait of my spiritual state. I see myself overspread with an habitual depravity, and cannot forbear crying out, with the abashed leper; *unclean! unclean!*—The sacred oracles in no wise misrepresent fallen man, when they describe him as *altogether become abominable*†. They are far from under-rating human works, when they denominate them *filthy rags*‡. Rags they are, if we consider their great imperfection; filthy rags, if we advert to their manifold defilements. And since the nature of GOD is irreconcilably averse to all contamination; since the law of GOD requires unspotted perfection; O! *who can stand before this holy LORD GOD*§, in any accomplishment of his own?

When I farther reflect, that I have only a very obscure glimpse of the divine purity, and am a mere novice in the knowledge of my own heart; how am I amazed at the lofty apprehensions which I once formed, concerning the dignity of my nature, and the integrity of my conduct! all owing to ignorance, the grossest ignorance of myself and the scriptures. How do I shudder to think, that in expecting justification from the law, I was resting the welfare of my immortal soul, not on the strength of a rock, but on the point of a dagger. I was going to the decisive tribunal, flushed with the falsest hopes, and charged with a set of glittering sins: going, like poor deluded Uriah||, not with any valid credentials, but with *the ministration of death*¶ in my hand.

* Levit. xiii. 45.

† Job xv. 16.

‡ Isai. lxiv. 6.

§ 1 Sam. 6. 20.

|| 2 Sam. xi. 14, 15.

¶ 2 Cor. iii. 9.

Though I cannot but acknowledge the arrogance of these pretensions, yet loth, very loth is my pride to renounce the pleasing absurdity. Self-love and self-importance has searched, and searched again, for something excellent. They can hardly brook the humiliation, of imploring all *sub forma pauperis**. With what reluctance is a sinner brought to confess himself, sinful in every duty, sinful in every capacity! strange perverseness!—But the charge is undeniable. However unwilling, I must plead guilty. *Thou art weighed in the balances †, and found wanting*, is written on all I am all I have all I do.—If I am thus defective, even in my own estimation; if I am utterly condemned, at the bar of my own conscience; *what then shall I do, when GOD riseth up? And when HE visiteth, what shall I answer him ‡?*

I now see the necessity of an imputed righteousness. Without some such object for my trust, I am undone. I long therefore to hear your arguments in its behalf. And I must declare to you; if it can be satisfactorily proved from the scriptures, it is the most comfortable doctrine in the world, and worthy of all acceptance.

A letter upon this subject, will be a singular favor, and I hope, an equal blessing to

Your obliged, and affectionate,

THERON:

* That is, under the character of a poor destitute, or as a beggar sues for his alms.

† Dan. v. 27.

‡ Job xxxi. 14.



LETTER III.



ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,

THOUGH all your letters give me pleasure, none was ever so highly pleasing, as your last. I look upon it with the same secret joy, as a compassionate physician observes some *very favorable* symptoms, in the crisis of a beloved patient's distemper.

What you ask, I shall, without any farther preface, attempt to execute. If my attempt proves satisfactory to your judgement, I am sure, it will be the most likely means, of *healing* your conscience, and *calming* your fears.—When we perceive the odious depravity of our nature ; when we discern the horrible iniquity of our lives ; and are sensible of that tremendous wrath, and everlasting vengeance, which are due to such guilty creatures : *then* nothing can be found that will administer solid comfort, but only the vicarious sufferings, and the imputed righteousness of JESUS CHRIST.

To this purpose one of the wisest and best of spiritual guides expresses himself; *has sin abounded ?* As undoubtedly it has, in our heart, and our life : *grace has much more abounded,* in the obedience, and the merits of our REDEEMER.—Nay, *has sin reigned ?* Exerted its malignant power, in the most extensive and most destructive manner ; rendering us subject unto death, both temporal and eternal ? *Even so has grace reigned ;* exerted its benign efficacy, in a

manner yet more triumphant; not only rescuing us from guilt and ruin, but restoring us to everlasting life and glory. And all this through the righteousness, the complete meritorious righteousness, brought in by JESUS CHRIST our LORD*.

You enquire after the proofs of this imputed righteousness. From a multitude I shall select a few. Sufficient, I hope, to make it appear—That this is the declared doctrine of our church, and the avowed belief of her most eminent divines—That it is copiously revealed through the whole Scriptures; revealed in many express passages, and delucible from a variety of instructive similitudes.

Hear the language of our common prayer, in a very affecting and solemn address to the ALMIGHTY: “We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful LORD, trusting in our own righteousness.”—If we may not, if we dare not, rely on our own righteousness, when we approach the *eucharistic table*; much less may we depend upon it, when we are summoned to the *decisive tribunal*.—Should you ask, on what we are to depend? The exhortation to the communion furnishes an answer; “On the meritorious death and passion of CHRIST, whereby alone we obtain remission of sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.”

The collect appointed, which is for the festival of circumcision, has this remarkable introduction; Almighty GOD, whose blessed SON *was obedient to the law for man*.” In what sense, or with what propriety, can this be affirmed? Unless CHRIST’s perfect obedience be referable to us, and accepted instead of ours? On any other interpretation, I should think, he was obedient, not for man, but for himself.

Should the artful critic give some other turn to these passages, it will avail him but little. Because the church, her own best expositor, has explained the meaning of such phrases, and put the matter beyond all doubt. In her eleventh article she says; “we are accounted righteous be-

“fore GOD only for the merits of our LORD and SAVI-
 “OUR JESUS CHRIST.”—The doctrine relating to par-
 don of sin, had been stated in a preceding article. This
 displays the method, whereby sinners may appear righteous
 in the sight of GOD, and in the court of heaven; so as to
 recover the divine favor, and obtain a title to eternal bliss.
 —This is done, not by any *native* righteousness, not by any
acquired righteousness, but wholly by an imputed righteous-
 ness. The two former methods are so far from constituting
 our reconciling and justifying righteousness, that they have
 no share in it; they contribute nothing towards it; but are
 totally excluded from it. We are accounted righteous, and
 accepted as such, ONLY (mark the expression) ONLY through
 the meritorious obedience, and propitiating blood of our
 great MEDIATOR

The homilies are, if it be possible, still more explicit,
 and more cogent. In the homily concerning the salvation
 of mankind, we read the following words;—“The Apos-
 “tle toucheth three things, which must go together in our
 “justification. On GOD’s part, his great mercy and grace,
 “On CHRIST’s part, the satisfaction of GOD’s justice,
 “or the price of our redemption, by the offering of his bo-
 “dy, and shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the law
 “perfectly. On our part, true and lively faith in the me-
 “rits of JESUS CHRIST, which yet is not ours, but by
 “GOD’s working in us.”—You see, according to the
 judgement of our venerable reformers, not only the offering
 of CHRIST’s body, and shedding of CHRIST’s blood, but
 also his perfect fulfilling of the law, are the adequate price
 of our redemption. All these act conjointly, they sweetly
 harmonize, in the great and glorious work. To suppose
 their disunion, is a doctrinal mistake, somewhat like that
 practical error of the Papists, in severing the sacramental
 wine from the sacramental bread; administering to the laity,
 the symbols of the slaughtered body, but with-holding the
 symbols of the streaming blood.

There are *other* clauses in the same homily, which set
 the seal of the church to our sentiments. I shall content my-
 self with transcribing one from the conclusion.—“CHRIST

“ says that the form of sound words, is the righteousness of all them, that truly believe. He for them paid their ransom by his death. He for them fulfilled the law in his life. So that now in HIM, and by HIM, every true *christian* may be called a fulfiller of the law ; forasmuch as that which their infirmity lacked, CHRIST’s righteousness hath supplied.”—This authority is as clear, as the doctrine authorized is comfortable. May the former sway our judgement ! may the latter cheer our hearts !

The homily on CHRIST’s nativity informs the reader, that the design of our LORD’s incarnation was—“ To give light unto the world and call sinners to repentance ; to fulfil the law for us, and become the propitiation for our sins ; to cast out the prince of this world, and destroy the works of the devil.”—We have all broke the law ; We are all unable to keep the law ; therefore, the blessed JESUS fulfilled the law—fulfilled it in *each* and *every* of its demands—fulfilled it, in the *highest* degree of perfection—and, what is of all considerations most delightful, fulfilled it *for us*. His obedience took the place of what we were obliged to perform, under the covenant of works and is not only the meritorious, but also the constituent cause of our justification.

So that—if there be any worthiness in our LORD’s most holy nature ; any merit in his exercise of the sublimest virtues ; any atoning efficacy, in his submission to the most ignominious sufferings, and tormenting death—these, according to our standard-system of orthodox divinity, are the *ground* of a sinner’s justification. And, according to the dictates of the most unbiassed reason, these are the *best*, the *surest* ground, that the heart can wish, or the imagination conceive.

Does it not, from the preceding quotations, appear ; that the doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of our REDEEMER, is far from being disclaimed by the *established church* ?—I am sorry, but constrained to own, that we rarely find any considerable strictures of this great evangelical peculiarity in our *modern* theological *writers*. Yet there have been preachers of the highest

repute, for judgement, and for piety, who professedly maintained this leading truth of the gospel.

The devout Bishop *Beveridge*, in his *private thoughts*, has left upon record the following very remarkable acknowledgement. Which, if it suited *his* state of eminent holiness, cannot be too humbling, my dear *Theron*, for your lips and for mine. "I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed, in all my life-time, with that reverence, or heard with that attention, or received the sacrament with that faith, or did any work with that pure heart, and single eye, as I ought to have done. Insomuch, that I look up on all my righteousness, but as filthy rags, and it is in the robes only of the righteousness of the SON of GOD, that I dare appear before the MAJESTY of heaven."

The fervent and affectionate Bishop *Hopkins**, speaks in perfect consonance with his brother of St. *Asaph*.—"The law was given us, not that we should seek justification by the observance of it, but finding it impossible to be justified by fulfilling it we should thereby be driven to CHRIST's righteousness; who hath both fulfilled it in himself, and satisfied for our transgressing of it; and therefore saith the Apostle, *The law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto CHRIST; that we might be justified by faith.* To this end it was promulged, that seeing the strictness of its precepts, the rigour of its threatenings, and withal being convinced of our impotence to fulfil its command, we might be urged by its terrors to fly to CHRIST, and find that righteousness in him which may answer all the demands of the law.,,

Bishop *Reynolds* † styled by his contemporaries, and not without reason; *A walking library* bears his testimony in the following words:—"CHRIST as our surety paid our debt, underwent the curse due to our sins, and bare them all

* See his Sermon on John vii. 19.

† See his treatise entitled the, "The Life of CHRIST."—Which, as well as all his other works, abound with striking sentiments; have much elegance of diction, a copious variety of learning, and a lively animating spirit of evangelical piety.

“ in his own body on the tree ; became subject to the law
 “ for us, and representatively in our stead fulfilled all the
 “ righteousness the law required ; active and passive. For
 “ sin being once committed, there must be a double act
 “ to justification : the sleering of the curse, and the fulfilling
 “ of righteousness anew. The one a satisfaction for the
 “ injury we have done to GOD, as our JUDGE : the other,
 “ the performance of a service which we owe unto him,
 “ as our MAKER.”

To this illustrious triumvirate, let me join Bishop *Davenant*.
 Who, for his great abilities, and unquestionable integrity,
 was appointed one of our religious plenipotentiaries, at the
 renowned synod of *Dort*. In his very valuable exposition
 of the epistle to the *Colossians*, he writes to this effect : “ *Ye*
 “ *are complete in CHRIST*. Ye are furnished, in that all-
 “ sufficient REDEEMER, with whatever is requisite to
 “ everlasting salvation. With *Wisdom* ; since it is the con-
 “ sumation of this noble endowment ; to know *CHRIST*
 “ and him crucified. With *righteousness* ; because he has
 “ perfectly satisfied the law *, and thoroughly expiated our
 “ guilt. With *sanctification* ; because his *SPIRIT* dwelling
 “ in our hearts, mortifies our corrupt affections, and renews
 “ the soul after the image of its CREATOR.”

Let me bring up the *rear* with a testimony, which, for
 clearness, solidity, and a full representation of the evangel-
 ical doctrine, might very justly have claimed a place in the
van. It is taken from an author, whom the general consent
 of our nation has distinguished with the title of *judicious*.
 The judicious *Hooker*, in a treatise on justification, says ;—
 It is a childish cavil our adversaries so “ greatly please them-
 “ selves with, exclaiming, that we tread all *christian* virtues
 “ under our feet ; because we teach, that faith alone justifi-
 “ eth. Whereas, by this speech, we never meant to exclude
 “ either hope or charity from being always joined as inse-
 “ parable mates with faith, in the man that is justified ; or

* In this respect principally (says our Author, enlarging upon the text) are believers complete : because, though destitute of any righteousness, that may properly be called their own, CHRIST has graciously enriched them with his. Vid. *Davenant in Epist. ad Coloss. Cap. ii. Com. 10.*

" works from being added as necessary duties, required of
 " every justified man: but to shew, that faith is the only
 " hand, which putteth on *CHRIST* to justification; and
 " *CHRIST* the only garment, which being so put on, co-
 " vereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the im-
 " perfection of our works, and preserveth us blameless in
 " the sight of *GOD*: before whom, otherwise, the weakness
 " of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable,
 " yea, to shut us out of the kingdom of heaven, where no-
 " thing that is not absolute can enter."

You will allow the sagacious Bishop *Sanderson* * to sum
 the evidence; or rather to make an important remark on
 the whole of the controversy. That great fight of the church,
 both in casuistical and practical divinity, observes;—"Theti-
 " dings of a REDEEMER must be blessed and welcome
 " news, to those that are sensible of their own poverty, and
 " take it of grace." Our eagle-eyed divine penetrates into
 the *true* cause of the prevailing averseness to this evangeli-
 cal doctrine. It is founded on the *seat* of the *heart*, more
 than upon any force of argument. People are but little, if
 at all, sensible of their spiritual and moral indigence; of
 the defects which depreciate, and the defilements which
 sully, whatever they have, and whatever they do. Nay,
 strongly tinctured with pride, they would be themselves the
Alpha, suffer the blessed *JESUS* to do no more than the
Omega, in procuring their eternal salvation. Therefore
 they can hardly be reconciled to the humbling character of
 an *Eleemosynary*; one who lives wholly upon the alms of
 the gospel, and is dependent upon grace for his all.

Whereas, was this grand obstacle once removed; were
 men convinced of *sin*, of exceeding sinfulness in their worst
 estate, and of remaining sinfulness in their best; they would
 soon be convinced of *righteousness* †, of the absolute neces-
 sity and inestimable worth of a REDEEMER's righteous-

* See his Sermon upon *Isai. l. lii. 3.*

† *John xvi. 8.*

ness they would no longer dispute against it but cordially receive it; and adore the goodness, the transcendent and unutterable goodness of GOD, in providing it.

I think, in one of our conferences I undertook to produce my vouchers from the antient *fathers*. Let me now subjoin two or three attestations of this kind.—From *one* of which you will perceive, that those early writers had a considerable degree of clearness upon the point: From the *other* you will see, that far from rejecting the doctrine, they embrace it with delight and rapture. And if you will admit of the *last*, you cannot be startled at any thing, which I shall advance upon the subject.—Let me only promise in general, that, if those authors are not so copious and explicit, with regard to the imputation of *active* righteousness; they abound with passages, which evince the *substitution* of CHRIST in our stead. Passages, which disclaim all dependence on any duties of our own, and fix the hopes of a sinner entirely upon the merits of his SAVIOUR. When this is the case I am not very solicitous about any particular forms of expression; and far from being angry, even though the words, which I think most significant, are not retained.

Clemens, first of the antient fathers, and an intimate acquaintance of *St. Paul's*, wrote an epistle to the *Corinthians*. It is full of manly sense and seraphic piety. Among other valuable things the truly apostolic man declares; *we are not* in any respect or in any degree, *justified by ourselves*, but wholly by JESUS CHRIST; *not by our own wisdom or prudence*, which could never find out the way; *not by the piety of our hearts, or works of righteousness performed in our lives*, which could never be sufficient for the purpose; *but by faith* or a fiduciary reliance on the righteousness of another. The one invariable method, *by which the Almighty SOVEREIGN has justified all his People, ever since the world began*.

Justin—who was first a *Gentile* philosopher, then an eminent *christian*, and at last a *martyr* for the truth—speaks more fully to the point: *What else could cover our sins, but the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST? By what possible means could we, unrighteous and unholy creatures, be justified, but*

only by the interposition of the SON of GOD in our behalf ; —Having, in this clause, made a profession of his faith ; —the good man, on the contemplation of such a privilege breaks out into a kind of holy transport. O SWEET DELIGHTFUL EXCHANGE ! A dispensation unsearchably wise and gracious. Benefits, quite unexpected, and rich beyond all our hopes ! That the transgression of many, should be hid by one righteous PERSON ; and that the righteousness of ONE, should justify many transgressions.

The followings words are remarkably strong, and the sentiments peculiarly bold. But they come from the pen of the finest writer in ecclesiastical antiquity. They have the great name, and venerable character of St. Chrysostom, for their commendatory preface.—*Fear not, says he on account of any of thy past transgression of the law, when once thou hast fled by faith to JESUS CHRIST. The most enormous and the most destructive violation of the Law, is, to be with-held by the consciousness as any guilt whatever, from believing on CHRIST. When thou actest faith on him, thou hast fulfilled, I might say, more than fulfilled the law. For thou hast received a better righteousness, than it could ever require : Thou art possessed of a better obedience, than any creature could possibly pay.*

Two or three witnesses of distinguished ability, and undoubted veracity, are a sufficient confirmation of any cause. For this reason, and to avoid a tiresome prolixity, I have set aside a multitude of voices ; which from the writings of our own and foreign divines, are ready to pour their united evidence.—And lest the business of quotation, though sparingly managed, should seem dry and tedious ; I will relieve your weariness, and enliven the collection, by an extract from the prince of English poetry.—*Michael*, the prophetic archangel, mentioning the destructive consequence of the Fall ; and asserting the GODHEAD of that glorious PERSON, who undertook to be the repairer of this deadly breach ; adds,

Which HE, who comes thy SAVIOUR, shall re-cure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works,
In thee and in thy seed. Nor can this be

But by fulfilling (that which thou didst want)
 Obedience to the law of GOD, impos'd
 On penalty of death ; and suffering death,
 The penalty to thy transgression due ;
 And due to theirs, which out of thine will grow,
 So ONLY can high Justice rest appaid*.

The same celestial teacher, speaking of the divine law ; explaining its nature and design ; that it demonstrates, by inestimable evidence, the very best of men to be guilty of sin and obnoxious to wrath ; displays likewise the great remedy provided by the gospel.

-That when they see
 Law can discover sin, but not remove,
 (Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
 The blood of bulls and goats) they may conclude,
 Some blood more precious must be paid for man ;
 Just for unjust ; that in such righteousness,
 To them by faith imputed, they may find,
 Justification towards GOD, and peace
 Of conscience †,

Here then is the express determination of our Homilies—supported by the authority of our *articles*—established by the concurrence of our *liturgy*—still farther ratified by the unanimous attestation of several celebrated Divines ; whose lives were the brightest ornament to our church, and whose writings are the most unexceptionable interpretations of her meaning.—As a capital, to crown and complete this grand column, supervenes the declaration of the anti-fathers ; those who flourished, and with the highest renown, in the first and purest ages of christianity.—So that, if great authorities carry any weight ; his illustrious name challenge any regard ; this tenet comes attended and dignified with very considerable *credentials*.

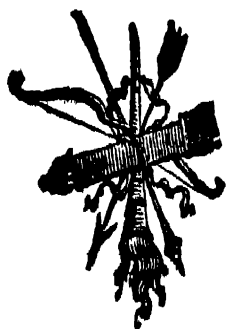
* MILTON, Book XII. 393.

† Book XII. 289.

Yet, I will venture to affirm, that all these, considerable as they appear, are the least of those testimonials, which recommend the doctrine to my Theron's acceptance, and which have gained it admittance into the heart of

His most affectionate

ASPASIO.





LETTER IV.



ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,

THE family, in which I have the satisfaction to reside, though remarkable for their genteel figure and ample fortune, are still more amiably distinguished by their benevolence, hospitality, and charity.—As they live at a distance from the market-town, the lady has converted one apartment of her house into a little dispensatory; and stocked it with some of the most common, the most needed, and most salutary medicines. Which, in cases of ordinary indisposition, she distributes to her indigent neighbours, with singular compassion, and with no small success.—This fine morning, Emilia has ordered some skilful hands into the fields to cull their healing simples, and lay up a magazine of health for the afflicted poor.—Camillus is withdrawn, to receive his rents, and settle accounts with his tenants.

Suppose, we act in concert with these valuable persons. Suppose, we range the delightful fields of Scripture, and form a collection, not of salutiferous herbs, but of inestimable texts; such as may be of sovereign efficacy, to assuage the anguish of a guilty conscience, and impart saving health to the distempered soul.—Suppose, we open the mines of divine inspiration, and enrich ourselves, not with the gold of Ophir, but with the unsearchable treasures of CHRIST; or with that perfect righteousness of our REDEEMER, which is incomparably more precious, than the revenues of a country, or the produce of Peru.

IN pleading for imputed righteousness, we have already urged the authority of our established church, and the suffrage of her most eminent divines.—The opinion of excellent writers, which has been the result of much learning, great attention, and earnest prayer, is no contemptible evidence. Yet we must always reserve the *casting voice*, for those infallible umpires, the prophets and apostles. *If we receive, with a deferential regard, the witness of men; the witness of GOD is greater,** and challenges the most implicit submission.—Which remark, naturally leads me to the intended subject of this epistle; or rather calls upon me to fulfil my late engagement, and shew—That the above-mentioned doctrine is copiously revealed, through the whole process of the scriptures.

LET me select a very significant portion from the epistle to the Romans; which, though little inferior to a decisive proof, is presented only as an introduction to others. *Now the righteousness of GOD without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST unto all, and upon all them that believe.†* The righteousness of GOD, signifies that righteousness, which the incarnate GOD wrought out in his own all-glorious person.‡ It is styled the righteousness of GOD, by way of superlative pre-eminence; in opposition to any righteousness of our own, and in contra-distinction to the righteousness of all creatures whatever.—This righteousness is *without the law*. Its efficacy has no dependence on, its merit receives no addition from, any conformity of our practice to the divine

John v. 9.

† Rom. iii. 21, 22.

‡ This explication, or something to the same purpose, has occurred already. But it is hoped the candid reader will not condemn the repetition, as a disagreeable or jejune tautology.—Because it is consonant to the practice of our great apostle, who repeats the term, re-inculcates the doctrine, and hardly knows how to desist from the favorite topic: like one, who was quite enamoured with the subject; who found music in the words; and whose happiness was bound up in the blessing.—Because it is conformable to another, and a greater example. The LORD JEHOVAH himself, within the compass of one chapter, once and again, yea, a third and a fourth time, styles this wonderful obedience, MY RIGHTEOUSNESS. As though the GOD of infinite perfection glowed in it; thought himself most eminently magnified by it; and was jealous to have all the honor resulting from it. See Isa. li.

law: being complete, absolutely complete in itself, and altogether sufficient to procure the reconciliation and acceptance of sinners.—This righteousness *is manifested* by the gospel; and made as clear, as an object which we behold with our own eyes. It was *witnessed by the law and the prophets*; and made as certain, as a fact which is attested by unquestionable evidence.—To produce this evidence; to examine its pertinency, and weigh its sufficiency, is our present pleasing business.

We may begin with that gracious declaration, made to the first transgressors: *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*;* shall destroy the works of the devil, and retrieve whatever was lost by his malicious artifices.† How could this be effected, but by restoring that righteousness, which for a while, our first parents possessed; which they ought always to have held fast, but from which they so soon and so unhappily swerved?—Take the position in the right sense, and *christianity is*, if not entirely, yet very nearly *as old as the creation*. It was comprehended in this blessed promise, as the *stamina* of the largest plants are contained in the substance of their respective seeds. Every subsequent revelation being no more, than a *gradual evolution* of this grand evangelical principle; acting like the vegetative powers of nature, which, in rearing an oak with all its spread of branches, only expand the tunics, and fill up the vessels of the acorn.

The doctrine seems to have been typically taught, by the remarkable manner of clothing our first parents.—All they could do for their own recovery, was like the patched and beggarly mantle of fig-leaves. This they relinquish, and GOD himself furnishes them with apparel.‡ Animals are

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* Gen. iii. 15.

† In some such sense, I think, our first parents must understand the promise. Otherwise it could yield them no effectual relief, under the distressing sense of their own misery, and the dismal apprehension of their posterity's ruin.

‡ Gen. iii. 21.

slain, not for food, but sacrifice; and the naked criminals are arrayed with the skins of those slaughtered beasts. The victims figured the *expiation* of CHRIST's death; the clothing typified the *imputation* of his righteousness.—In perfect conformity, perhaps with a reference, to the passage thus interpreted, the apostle just now expressed himself; *even the righteousness of GOD, which is not only made over * to all believers, as a rich portion; but put * upon all, as a beautiful garment.* Whereby alone their moral deformity can be covered, and their everlasting confusion prevented.—*Milton*, it is certain, speaking of this memorable transaction, considers it in the same spiritual sense:

*Nor HE their outward only with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness † (much more
Opprobrious !) with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, cover'd from his FATHER's sight.*

In thy seed, says the great JEHOVAH to his servant *Abraham*, *shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*‡ That the seed here mentioned is CHRIST, the apostle § places beyond all doubt. Both scripture and reason declare, That *true blessedness* must necessarily include—the pardon of sins, and the favor of GOD—the sanctification of our souls, and the inheritance of life eternal. None of which are to be acquired by any human performances; but all are to be sought, and all may be found, in the root and offspring of *Abraham*, JESUS CHRIST. Who is therefore most pertinently styled, THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS; The *actual* desire of every enlightened nation; and the

* Rom. iii. 22.

† An allusion to Gen. iii. 10. Where Adam confesses before JEHOVAH; *I heard thy voice in the garden and was afraid, because I was naked.* Which must denote, what MILTON truly styles, an *inward nakedness*, or the loss of righteousness. Since nothing externally, no want of bodily ornament, could have exposed our first parent to the wrath of GOD, or need have made him afraid of it.

‡ Gen. xxi. 18,

§ See St. Paul's comment upon this invaluable promise, Gal. 3, &c. This commentator, we all allow, was guided by the SPIRIT, and knew the mind of GOD. According to his exposition of the text, it is pregnant with the doctrine of justification by faith, and contains an abridgment of the gospel.

implicit desire of all nations whatever. Because all, without any exception, covet, what is to be derived only from **JESUS CHRIST** the righteous, *real* happiness.

The patriarchal age, and the legal œconomy, bore their testimony to this truth, by typical persons, emblematical miracles, and figurative usages. Indeed, the whole ceremonial service was a grand *series* of types, representing **CHRIST** and his everlasting righteousness. In all which, this was the *unanimous* though silent language; *behold the LAMB of GOD, that taketh away the sin of the world*—These I shall not stay to discuss; because proofs, more explicit and positive, wait for our consideration. Only I would just make a transient observation, relating to one very remarkable constitution of the *Jewish* ritual.

The High-priest had, on the front of his mitre, a plate of pure gold, engraven with that venerable motto*, **HOLINESS TO THE LORD**. Which was always to be on his forehead, when he performed the solemn ministrations of the sanctuary; and for this important reason, that the people *might be accepted before the LORD*†. Did not this most clearly foreshew the immaculate holiness of our great **HIGH-PRIEST**? And with equal clearness imply, that his holiness should procure acceptance for all his followers?

In the book of job, we have several hints of this truth, and one passage very express to our purpose.—*Elihu* describes an unconverted person, under the chastising hand of providence. *Whose life, through the extremity of its disease, draws near to the grave; and to his soul, through the multitude of his iniquities, is ready to become a prey to the destroyers.* In this deplorable condition, *if there be present with him, the MESSENGER ‡ of the covenant of peace; that great INTERPRETER ‡ of the divine counsels, who for his super-excellent wisdom, is justly acknowledged to be one among a thousand, or rather the chiefest among ten thousand.* If he, by his enlightening **SPIRIT**, vouchsafe to shew unto the afflicted man his own perfect

* Exod. xxviii. 36, 37.

† Exod. xxviii. 38.

‡ ‡ See Job. xxxiii. 22, &c.

righteousness; that most meritorious uprightness, on which alone a sinner may depend, both for temporal and eternal salvation. Then the poor distressed creature, attentive to this instruction, and applying to this righteousness, is made partaker of pardon. GOD is the sovereign LORD of life and death, *is gracious unto him, and saith* in the greatness of his strength, as well as the multitude of his mercies, *Deliver him from going down into the pit of corruption*, as a pledge of his deliverance from the pit of perdition. For, I have found a reason sufficient to satisfy my justice. I have received an atonement, in behalf of this once obnoxious, now reconciled transgressor.

But why I do insist upon one particular paragraph? It seems to be the main design of the *whole* book, to overthrow all pretensions of any justifying righteousness in man. That the wretched sinner, nay, that the greatest saint, stript of every personal plea, may see nothing to rely on, but the merits of a REDEEMER. This is the final issue of all those warm debates, which pass between the afflicted hero and his censorious friends. This is the grand result of Elihu's calm reasoning, and of God Almighty's awful interrogatories. The apparent centre this, * in which all the lines terminate; justly therefore to be considered, as the principal scope of the whole work.

I must not omit an excellent observation, which I find in some *critical and explanatory notes*, † on the last words of David. The judicious author proving, that this song relates to Christ; that it displays the dignity of our REDEEMER, under the character of the KING and the JUST ONE, adds, as an explication of the last amiable and glorious title. —“ Our LORD JESUS CHRIST is so called, not so much
 “ for having fulfilled all righteousness, in his own person,
 “ and performed an unsinning obedience to the will of
 “ GOD, as because his righteousness imputed to us, we
 “ also upon the terms of the gospel, are justified, or ac-
 “ counted righteous before GOD.”

* See Job xlii. 6.

† By Dr. Grey. See a Sam. xxiii. 3, &c.

I think we may evidently discern the same vein of evangelical doctrine, running through many of the Psalms—*He shall convert my soul*; * turn me not only from sin and ignorance, but from every false confidence, and every deceitful refuge. “He shall bring me forth in paths of righteousness,” in those paths of imputed righteousness, which are always adorned with the trees of holiness; are always watered with the fountains of consolation; and always terminate in everlasting rest.—Some, perhaps, may ask why I give this sense of the passage? Why may it not signify the paths of duty, and the way of our own obedience? Because, such effects are here mentioned, as never have resulted, and never can result, from any duties of our own. These, detached from our SAVIOUR’s righteousness, are not *green pastures*, but a parched and blasted heath: are not *still waters*, but a troubled and disorderly stream. Neither can these speak peace, or administer comfort, when we pass through the valley and shadow of death. To yield these blessings is the exalted office of CHRIST, and the sole prerogative of his obedience.

Admitting, that this obedience is of sovereign advantage, during the years of life, and in the hour of death; it may still occur to the serious and inquisitive mind, what will be our safeguard, in the invisible state? When the soul departs, and our place on earth knows us no more: when the body revives, and we shall all stand before the judgement-seat: what will *then* avail us?—The same righteousness of our divine LORD. This, if I mistake not, is displayed in the very next psalm. Which begins with a solicitous enquiry; subjoins a satisfactory answer; and closes with a most pertinent but rapturous apostrophe.—This is the enquiry; *who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or, who shall rise up in his holy place?*—To which this is the answer; *even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart* †. *He shall receive the blessing* ‡ of remission and reconciliation; and righteousness, as the cause of both, from the GOD of his salvation.

* Psal. xxiii. 3. † Psal. xxiv. 4.

‡ Psal. xxxvii. 5.

Even that perfect righteousness, which is not acquired by man, but bestowed by **JEHOVAH** ; which is not performed by the saint, but received * by the sinner : which is the only solid basis, to support our hopes of happiness and the holy valid plea, for an admission into the mansions of joy.—Then follows the apostrophe. The prophet foresees the ascension of **CHRIST** and of his saints. He sees his **LORD**, marching at the head of the redeemed world, and conducting them unto the city of the living **GOD**. Suitably to such a view, and in a most beautiful strain of poetry he, addresses himself to the heavenly portals ; lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the king of glory, with all the heirs of his grace and righteousness, shall make their triumphant entry ; shall enter in, and go out no more.

Having shewn the powerful and extensive influence of our **REDEEMER**'s righteousness ; its efficacy, in this world to justify, in the other world to glorify ; well may the sweet singer of Israel profess his supreme value for it, and entire dependence on it. *I will go forth in the strength of the **LORD GOD**, and will make mention of thy righteousness only †.* As though he had said ; I will have recourse to no other righteousness, for the consolation of my soul. I will plead no other righteousness, for the recommendation of my person. I will fly to no other righteousness, for my final acceptance, and endless felicity.—This is that raiment of needlework and clothing of wrought gold ‡, in which the church, the queen-consort, is presented to her immortal bridegroom ; with which she enters the everlasting habitations, to be “ for ever with the **LORD**.”—This is that garment for glory and for beauty §, which clothed our great **HIGHPRIEST** ; and, descending to his very feet ||, clothes and adorns the lowest members of his mystical body.

* Rom. v. 17. Psal. xxiv. 5. † Psal. lxxi. 16,

‡ Psal. xlv. 13. § Exod. xxviii. 31.

|| Rev. i. 13.

Recollecting all the foregoing particulars, justly and on the most rational ground, does our royal author declare ; “ Blessed are the people, that know the joyful sound : “ they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. “ In thy name shall they rejoice all they do : and in thy “ righteousness shall they be exalted.”—They are truly blessed, they alone are happy, who know the joyful sound of the gospel ; not only receive it with their ears, but admit it into their very hearts ; so as to partake of the sacred peace, and spiritual liberty, which it proclaims.—They shall walk in the light of thy countenance ; they shall enjoy such communications of thy grace, and such manifestations of thy love, as will constitute the serenity and sunshine of their souls.—In thy name O LORD JESUS CHRIST, in thy matchless person, and thy infinite merits, shall they rejoice. And not occasionally, but habitually ; not barely at some distinguished intervals, but all the day. Their joy shall be as lasting, as it is substantial:—Though abased, though confounded in themselves, in thy righteousness shall they be exalted * ; now exalted to a state of holy friendship and delightful communion with GOD ; and exalted when time shall be no more, to a state of celestial glory, and eternal bliss.

How thoroughly evangelical is this seraphic writer ! he has joy, he has blessedness, and he looks for everlasting exaltation. Yet not from his faith, his repentance, and his own sincere obedience. According to this, which is the modern scheme, faith, instead of receiving, would *supplant* the LORD JESUS : Repentance, instead of being the gift of CHRIST, would become his rival : and sincere obedience, which is for the praise and glory of GOD, would eclipse and impoverish his grace.—But David adopts no such doctrine. This is the invariable language of his heart ; this the burden of his song ; all my springs of hope, of trust and consolation, O thou adored IMMANUEL, are in thee †.

* Psal. lxxix. vs. 26.

† Psal. lxxvii.

This sense is the less precarious, I had almost said the more certain, as it exactly corresponds with the analogy of faith, and coincides with the express declarations of other scriptures.—*Isaiah* is styled the *evangelist* of the *Jewish* church. Because, more frequently than any of the prophets, he celebrates, and more copiously explains, this and other peculiarities of the gospel.—In the very first chapter, he preaches these glad tidings ; *Sion* shall be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteousness. *Sion* the gospel church, composed of fallen creatures, somewhat disobedient to their *GOD*, and enslaved to *satan*, shall be redeemed. Redeemed, not with corruptible things silver and gold, but by severe judgement executed on their glorious *HEAD*, and gracious *REPRESENTATIVE*. And not by these only, but by righteousness also ; by the perfect and most meritorious obedience of the same divinely excellent *PERSON*.

Our sacred author bears his testimony with warmer zeal and brighter evidence, as he proceeds in his incomparable discourses. Surely, shall one say (or as it may be rendered only) in the *LORD* have I righteousness and strength*. Please to observe *Theron*, it is not said, in my works, in my own works, in my own repentance, no, nor in my own faith but in the *LORD*, in the incarnate *JEHOVAH*, have I righteousness.—Righteousness for justification, and strength for sanctification. An imputed righteousness, to procure my acceptance ; an imparted strength, to produce my holiness. The first, constituting my title to the everlasting inheritance ; the last, forming my personal preparation for its enjoyment. Surely, which expresses a firm persuasion and an unshaken affiance. Only, which denotes an utter renunciation of all other confidence, and excludes every other ground of hope.—Righteousnesses, the original is in the plural number. Which seems to be used, not without an important design ; to enlarge the significance of the word, and make it correspond with the richness of the blessing. So that it may imply the fulness and superemi-

nent excellency of this gift of grace ; as comprehending whatever, either of suffering or of obedience, is requisite to the justification of sinners.

Therefore the prophet adds ; in the LORD, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*. Most important and most precious text ! every expression is big with truth, and bright with grace.—All the seed : intimating, that the way of salvation, in every age of the world, and to all the people of GOD, is invariable and one.—What is this invariable way ? It is to be pardoned, and delivered from wrath, to be approved, and admitted into favour ; or as the inspired penman expresses it, to be justified.—How is this effected ? Not by our upright aims, not by our sincere endeavours, but by having a real and proper righteousness.—Where is this to be had ? Not in ourselves ; not in any accomplishments, or any performance of our own ; in the LORD REDEEMER, and his consummately righteous nature, affections, actions.—Are these sufficient for the purpose ? So sufficient, that we may not only confide, but glory in them. They afford cause not only for the stedfastness of reliance, but for the elevations of triumph. Cleaving to these we may look sin and satan, look death and hell, in the face ; and say, with a noble defiance, who shall condemn us ?

What he had just now asserted, he exemplifies in his own, and in the person of every true believer. *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD ; my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*†. True believers are compared, in one of our sacred eclogues, to *a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot*‡ : to horses, than which no animal is more stately and graceful to Egyptian horses, which were the best and completest, then in the world : to those in Pharaoh's chariot, which, doubtless, were a choice

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* Isai. xlv. 25. † Isai. xli. 10.

‡ Cant. i. 9.

set; selected from thousands; and finest, where all were fine. Here, methinks, I see the comparison realized. *Christians*, endued with such a spirit, as breathes in this animated text, are like collections of gallant and majestic steeds; not destined to low drudgery, but appointed to run in the royal chariot; all life; full of fire; champing the bit, and eager for the chase. Nothing can more beautifully describe a state of exultation and ardour, than the preceding similitude, or the following words—*I will rejoice; I will greatly rejoice; my very soul, and all that is within me, shall be joyful in my GOD.* Wherefore? Because he *has clothed me*, undone sinner as I am, *with the garments of salvation*; because *he hath covered me*, defective as all my services are, *with the robe of righteousness*. A robe, which hides every corruption, and covers every sin; so that neither stain nor deformity appear in my character. A robe, which adorns and dignifies my soul; renders it fair as the moon, clear as the sun *, and meet for the inheritance of saints in light.—Having represented this righteousness, in a variety of grand and charming views—the Prophet farther characterizes it, as the *unalterable and never failing* origin of our justification and happiness. This he displays by a train of images, bold and sublime to the last degree. *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth wax old like a garment; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished †.*—Observe the vast dimensions, and the firm foundations, both of the upper and lower world. How strong, how steadfast, they all appear! Yet these, indissoluble as they may seem, shall perish.—This majestic globe, on which summers shine, and flowery prospects smile, shall lose its beautiful gloss; and soon be laid aside, like a decayed useless garment. Even that more majestic concave, in which stars glitter, and comets glow, shall be deprived of its very superior splendor; and vanish away, like the unsubstantial dissolving smoke.—Whereas, *my salvation*, together with the inestimable blessings com-

* Cant. vi. 10.

† Isai. li. 6.

prehended in it, shall subsist, shall flourish *for ever*. And *my righteousness*, which is the meritorious cause of all, *shall not be abolished*; but remain an immoveable basis and an inviolable sanctuary, for the repose and safety of sinners.—

In short; whether there be moral virtues, they shall be found wanting; whether there be christian graces, they shall prove ineffectual; but my conformity to the law, and my obedience unto death, neither need addition, nor admit of alteration. They are *all-sufficient* in their merit, and in their agency *everlasting*.

When *day* arises on our benighted hemisphere, it breaks and spreads by a gradual increase. Forming, first, the grey twilight; next, the blushing morn; then, the shining light; till all is heightened into the blaze and glow of noon.—When *spring* revisits our wintry clime, she also advances by gentle degrees. First, swells the bud, and protrudes the gem. Then, expands the leaf, and unfolds the blossom. The face of things is continually changing for the better; till, at length, all the country is covered with bloom and verdure.—This leisurely process, renders the *strong* effulgence of the celestial orb, more supportable; and the *lovely* expansions of the vegetable creation, more observable.

So progressive and increasing are the displays of JESUS CHRIST, exhibited in the scriptures. Whose appearance is unspeakably *more delightful* to the soul, than the emanations of orient light are to the eye, or the entertainments of the vernal season to our other senses.—The gloom of fallen *Adam* was alleviated by a ray from this SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.—Abraham and the patriarchs saw afar off the blessed JESUS, *as the morning spread upon the mountains**.—The *psalmist* and the prophets, beheld his nearer approaches, like the sun upon the point of rising.—To the Apostles and Evangelists he arose, in perfect lustre, and complete beauty. The grace and the privileges, which *dawned* under other dispensations, are brought even to meridian light by the gospel.—This I mention, just to intimate, what you may expect from a following letter.

In the mean time, let us attend to the Prophet Daniel. He records a message from heaven, which is more clearly descriptive of this great evangelical blessing, than all the foregoing texts.—He had been under much distress, and in great perplexity : afflicted for his own, and his countrymen's sins ; anxious for the welfare of the chosen nation, and the prosperity of true religion. When an angel was dispatched to the holy mourner, with this most cheering news ; which, received by faith, is the richest balm to a wounded conscience, and the only remedy for a guilty world. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city ; to finish the transgression, and make an end of sin ; to make reconciliation for iniquity ; and to bring in everlasting righteousness**.—This prophecy, without all contradiction, relates to the MESSIAH. It foretels, that, in the fulness of time, he should *finish the transgression* ; restrain and suppress the power of corruption, by purifying to himself a peculiar people.—Should make end of sin ; by sealing up or creating its guilt, and totally abolishing its condemning power—Should make reconciliation for iniquity ; by sustaining the vengeance due to sinners, and fully satisfying the divine justice for all their offences.

But, as to suffer punishment, is one thing ; and to obey the precept, is another : as pardon of sin, does by no means complete the privilege of justification ; It is added, that the MESSIAH should also bring in an everlasting righteousness—A righteousness, or an adequate and perfect conformity to all the dictates of the law. Which consists, in an habitual holiness of nature, and an actual obedience of life, This he should not barely publish, but accomplish and *bring in*. That it may be presented both to GOD and man ; to GOD, for the reparation of his violated law ; to GOD, for the reparation of his ignominious sins ; to man, for the justification of his obnoxious person—That this righteousness should be *everlasting* ; not such as may be compared to the morning cloud, which soon passeth away ; or to the early dew, which is soon dried up ; but such as will out-last the hills,

on which the latter shines; and out-last the skies, through which the former fails. A righteousness, whose merits extend to every period and every acquisition of our lives; and when once made ours by imputation, remains and will remain our unalienable property.—To this all the Saints, who in antient generations, pleased GOD, owe their acceptance; on this, all the children of men, who, in future ages, hope for his favor, must rely; by this the whole assembly of the blessed, will be invariably and eternally precious in his sight.—Exalted character! Can it be applicable to any thing less, than the righteousness of the incarnate GOD? Surely none can imagine, that *Daniel* would speak in such a magnificent strain of any *human* righteousness; since, in this very chapter, he professedly depreciates himself, his fellow-saints, and all human performances whatever.

I forgot, in the proper place, to consult the prophet *Jeremiah*. Let us now refer ourselves to his determination. Celebrating the SAVIOUR of *Judah* and *Israel*, he says; *this is his name, whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*. A determination, so clear and satisfactory, as not to leave, one would almost conclude, any room for appeal.—Should the sense of the passage be questioned, I think, there cannot be a more authentic explication, than the preceding extracts from *Isaiah* and *Daniel*. Having the unanimous attestation of two inspired penmen, we may venture to abide by such authority, even in opposition to some respectable names.—In the verse immediately foregoing, the *essential* holiness of the REDEEMER is displayed, under the character of the RIGHTEOUS BRANCH.—The sanctity, which he *will impart* to his subjects, is intimated by his *executing judgment and justice in the earth*.—In the clause, we have quoted, his *imputed* righteousness is foretold and promised.—Thus, the several sentences are distinct; the description of the SAVIOUR is complete; and he appears perfectly suited to the exigences of a wretched world. A world, in its worst estate, enslaved to Satan; and in its best, falling short of the glory of GOD,

—This, therefore, I take to be the grand and extensive meaning of the Prophet ; not barely, the righteous LORD ; not barely, the LORD who infuses righteousness into sinful souls ; but the incarnate JEHOVAH*, whose *mediatorial* righteousness is, by an act of gracious imputation, *ours*—to all the intents of justification and salvation, *ours*—as much *ours* for these blessed purposes, as if we had wrought it out, each in his own person.

Foreseeing and contemplating these blessings, the enraptured *Zechariah* cries out ; “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold, thy King cometh unto thee ; he is just, and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass †.”—He addresses himself to *Sion* and *Jerusalem*, to the ecclesiastical and civil community. People of all ranks and of every character, are exhorted to rejoice : to rejoice greatly ; nay, to express the joy of their heart ; by loud hallelujahs, and triumphant exclamations. What is the cause of this general delight ? Who can fill both church and state with such high satisfaction ? *Thy king cometh unto thee* ; even that glorious KING, who rules in heaven, and rules in the heart ; whose service is freedom, and whose laws are love. He comes, to be made flesh, and to dwell in thy nature.—He is just ; divinely righteous in thy stead.—*Having salvation* ; not setting thee to procure it, but procuring it for thee. Bringing with him a great, a complete, an eternal salvation ; fully prepared, in all points finished, and free for thy acceptance. That none may be discouraged, and none deterred, from applying to this PRINCE of Peace, he is, amidst all the honors of his sovereignty, lowly : does not abhor the basest, will not despise the meanest : to the poor and worthless his gospel is preached, for the guilty and abominable his benefits are intended.—As an emblem, as a proof, of this most amiable and condescending goodness, he will ride ; not like the conquerors of the nations, in a splendid triumphal chariot, or on a richly caparisoned steed ; but upon the most mean and despicable of all

* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

† Zech. ix. 9.

animals, an ass : nay, what is still more despicable, on a rude undisciplined colt, the wayard fool of an ass.

And now—since my *Theron* confesses himself to be *miserable, and poor, and naked* ; since the eyes of his understanding are enlightened, to see the impurity of his heart, and the imperfection of his righteousness—what advice, cheering and salutary, shall I suggest ? O ! let him listen to an ADVISER, infinitely more able and compassionate. Listen to HIM, who is the ANTIEN OF DAYS, and the WISDOM OF GOD ; *I counsel thee, says the blessed JESUS, to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed* *.—*Gold* ! What can this denote, but all those spiritual treasures, which are hid in *CHRIST* ? Which are in measure, unsearchable ; in value, inestimable ; in duration, eternal.—*White raiment* ! Surely this must signify the righteousness of our REDEEMER ; which is all purity, and all perfection. Which clothes the soul, as a most suitable and commodious garment arrays the body. Which will present the believer, void of shame, and free from blemish ; will present him, with confidence and honor, before the throne of the MAJESTY in the heavens.

This, to use the delicate language, and amiable images of Isaiah—This doctrine, embraced by a realizing faith, is the only pillow of rest, wherewith ye may cause the weary and heavy-laden soul to find repose ; and this is the sovereign cordial, prepared by infinite mercy, for the refreshment of anxious and desponding transgressors. O ! Let us not be in the number of those proud and refractory creatures, who, though they infinitely needed, yet would not hear † the gracious news, nor receive the unspeakable benefit.—In this respect, and in this most eminently, is that other saying of the same sublime teacher, true ; the LORD of hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the residue of his people ‡. Shall we tear from our temples,

* Rev. iii. 18.

† Isai. xxviii. 12.

‡ Isai. xxxviii. 5.

or reject with disdain, this unfading and heavenly ornament : in order to substitute a mean and tawdry chapaleet of our own ?

Let me add a pertinent passage from one of our celebrated dramatic writers. Which, if proper in his sense, will be incomparably more so, according to our manner of application.

—————It were contemning;
With impious self-sufficient arrogance;
This bounty of our GOD, not to accept,
With every mark of honor, such a gift.

I might proceed to urge this expostulation of the Poet, as I might easily have multiplied my quotations from holy writ. But studious of brevity, I resign both, without farther enlargement, to your own meditation. Yet more studious of my friend's happiness, I cannot conclude without wishing him an interest, a clear and established interest, in this everlasting righteousness of CHRIST. For so, and so only, can he have everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.—I am, my dear Theron,

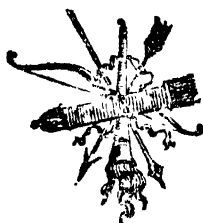
Inviolably yours,

ASPASIO.

P. S. Opposite to the room in which I write, is a most agreeable prospect of gardens and the fields. These, covered with herbage, and loaded with corn : those adorned with flowers, and abounding with esculents. All appearing with so florid and so beautiful an aspect, that they really seem, in conformity to the Psalmist's description, even to laugh and sing.—Let me just observe, that all these fine scenes, all these rich productions sprung—from what ? From the dissolution of the respective seeds. The seeds planted by the gardener, and the grain sowed by the husbandman, first perished in the ground, and then the copious increase arose.

Much after the same manner, a true faith in CHRIST and his righteousness arises—from what ? From the ruins

of self-sufficiency, and the death of personal excellency. Let me therefore intreat my Theron, still to keep an eye on the depravity of his nature, and the miscarriages of his life. The more clearly we see, the more deeply we feel; our guilt and our misery, the more highly we value the obedience of our blessed SURETY. — In such a heart, faith will flourish as a rose, and lift up its head like a cedar in *Lebanon*. To such a soul, the great REDEEMER's righteousness will be welcome, as waters to the thirsty soul, or as rivers in the sandy desert.





LETTER V.



ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,

GIVE me leave to relate an uncommon accident ; which happened a little while ago, in the neighbourhood ; and of which I myself was a spectator.—The day was the Sabbath ; the place appropriated to divine worship, was the scene of this remarkable affair ; and the instant of its taking place, was the beginning of the sermon. When the ambassador of CHRIST risen with a venerable aspect, and addressing his audience with becoming gravity, drew attention “ still as night, or summer’s noon-tide air.”

At this interval of deep composure, a boy came running into the church, breathless and trembling. He told, but in a low voice, those who stood near, that a press-gang* was advancing, to besiege the doors, and arrest the sailors.—*An alarm* was immediately taken. The seamen, with much hurry, and no small anxiety, began to shift for themselves. The rest of the congregation, perceiving an unusual stir, were struck with surprize.—A whisper of enquiry ran from seat to seat ; which increased, by degrees, into a confused murmur, and a strange commotion. No one could inform his neighbour. Therefore, every one was left to

* The reader, it is hoped, will excuse whatever may appear low, or favor of the Plebian, in any of these circumstances. But as this was a real matter of fact, which lately happened in one of our sea-port towns ; truth, even in a plain dress, may possibly be no less acceptable than fiction, tricked up with the most splendid embellishments.

solve the appearance, from the suggestions of a *timorous imagination*. Some suspected, the town was on fire. Some were apprehensive of an invasion from the *Spaniards*. Others looked up, and looked round, to see if the walls were not giving way, and the roof falling upon their heads. — In a few moments, the consternation became general. The men stood like statues, in silent amazement, and unavailing perplexity. The women shrieked aloud; fell into fits; sunk to the ground in a swoon. Nothing was seen, but *wild disorder*; nothing heard, but *tumultuous clamour*. — Drowned was the preacher's voice. Had he spoke in thunder, his message would scarce have been regarded. To have gone on with his work, amidst such a ferment of stunning sounds and astonished minds, had been like arguing with a whirlwind, or talking to a tempest.

This brought to my mind that great *tremendous day*, when the heavens shall pass away; when the earth shall be dissolved; and all its inhabitants receive their final doom. — If, at such incidents of very inferior dread, our hearts are ready to fail; what unknown and inconceivable astonishment must seize the guilty conscience, when the hand of the ALMIGHTY shall open those unparalleled scenes of wonder, desolation, and horror! — When the trumpet shall sound — The dead arise — The world be in flames — The JUDGE on the throne — and all mankind at the bar!

*The trumpet shall sound**, says the prophetic teacher. And how alarming, how stupendous the summons! Nothing equal to it, nothing like it, was ever heard through all the regions of the universe, or all the revolutions of time. — When conflicting armies have discharged the bellowing artillery of war, or when victorious armies have shouted for joy of the conquest, the seas and shores have rung, the mountains and plains have echoed. But the voice of the archangel, and the tramp of GOD, will resound from pole to pole. It will shake the pillars of earth, and startle the dungeon of hell. — Stronger, stranger still! It will penetrate even the deepest recesses of the tomb. It will pour its

* Cor. xv. 52.

amazing thunder into all those abodes of silence. The dead, the very dead, shall hear.

When the trumpet has sounded, *the dead shall arise*—In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the graves open; the monumental piles are cleft asunder; the families, the nations under ground, start into day. What an immense harvest of men and women, springing up from the caverns of the earth, and the depths of the sea! Stand a while my soul, and contemplate the wonderful spectacle.—*Adam* formed in paradise, and the babe born but yesterday, the earliest ages, and latest generations, meet upon the same level. Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, people of all climes and languages, unite in the promiscuous throng. Here, those vast armies, which, like swarms of locusts, covered countries; which, with an irresistible sweep, over-run empires; here they all appear, and here they are all lost. Lost, like the small drop of a bucket, when plunged amidst the unfathomable and boundless ocean.—O! the multitudes! the multitudes*! which these eyes shall survey, when *GOD calleth the heavens from above, and the earth that he may judge his people*. What shame must flush the guilty cheek! What anguish wound the polluted breast! To have all their filthy practices, and infamous tempers, exposed before this innumerable croud of witnesses!—Fly, my Theron; and fly my soul; instantly let us fly, earnestly let us fly, to the purifying blood of *JESUS*. That all our sins may be blotted out; that we may be found unblameable and unreprouable, in the presence of the assembled world! and, what is infinitely more to be revealed, in the sight of the most omnipotent *GOD*.

When the swarm issues, the hive shall burn. There is no more need of this habitable globe. The elect have fought a good fight, and finished their course. The wicked have been tried, and found incorrigible. The important drama is ended. Every actor has performed his part. Now

* If, as it is commonly supposed, the earth contains at one period of time, no less than four hundred millions of souls: what a congregation must all those make, which have succeeded each other for seven thousand years!

therefore the scenes are taken down ; and the stage is demolished. *Who be to the earth, and to the works thereof !* Its streams are turned into pitch, its dust into brimstone ; and the breath of the ALMIGHTY, like a torrent of fire, enkindles the whole. See ! see ! how the conflagration rages—spreads—prevails over all. The forests are in a blaze, and the mountains are wrapt in flame. Cities, kingdoms, continents, sink in the burning deluge. *London, Europe, Britain are no more.* Through all the receptacles of water, through all the tracts of land, through the whole extent of air, nothing is discernable, but one vast, prodigious, fiery ruin. Where now are the treasures of the covetous ? Where the possessions of the mighty ? Where the delights of the voluptuary ?—How wise, how happy are they, whose portion is lodged in heavenly mansions ! Their inheritance is incorruptible. Such as the last fire cannot reach, nor the dissolution of nature impair.

We look upwards. The azure vault cleaves. That stately expanse is rolled back like a scroll ; the regions of bliss are seen ; and the JUDGE appears ! *He cometh*, cries a mighty seraph, the herald * of his approach, *he cometh to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgement unto the people !*—He cometh, not as formerly, in the habit of a servant, but clad with uncreated glory, and arrayed in light inaccessible. He cometh, not meanly followed by twelve weak disciples, but magnificently attended with the armies of heaven. Angels and Archangels form his retinue : principalities and powers wait at his feet : the cherubim and seraphim are upon the wing to execute his commands. Behold him, ye faithful followers of the LAMB ; and wonder and love. This is HE, who bore all *your* iniquities on the ignominious cross. This is HE, who fulfilled all righteousness for the justification of *your* persons.—Behold him, ye despisers of his grace ; and wonder and perish. This is HE, whose merciful overtures you have contemned, and on whose precious blood you have trampled.

* 1 Thess. iv. 16.

The great *white throne**, beyond description agust and formidable, is erected. The KING of heaven, the LORD of glory, takes his seat on the dreadful tribunal. *Mercy*, on his right-hand, displays the olive-branch of peace, and holds forth the crown of righteousness. *Justice*, on his left, poises the impartial scale, and unsheaths the sword of vengeance. While *wisdom* and *holiness*, brighter than ten thousand suns, beam in his divine aspect.—What are all the preceding events, to this new scene of dignity and awe? The peals of thunder, sounding in the archangel's trumpet; the blaze of a burning world, and the strong convulsions of expiring nature; the unnumbered myriads of the dead, starting into instantaneous life, and thronging the astonished skies, all these seem familiar incidents, compared with the appearance of the incarnate JEHOVAH.—Amazement, more than amazement, is all around. Terror and glory unite in their extremes. From the sight of his majestic eye, from the insupportable splendors of his face, the earth itself and the very heavens *flee away*†.—How then? Oh! how shall the ungodly stand? Stand in his angry presence, and draw near to this consuming fire?

Yet draw near they must, and take their tryal—their decisive tryal at his righteous bar. Every action comes under examination. For each idle word they must give account. Not so much as a secret thought escapes this exact scrutiny.—How shall the criminals, the impenitent criminals, either conceal their guilt, or elude the sentence? They have to do with a sagacity, too keen to be deceived; with a power, too strong to be resisted; and (O! terrible, terrible consideration!) with a severity of most just displeasure, that will *never* relent, *never* be intreated more.—What gastly despair lours on their pale looks! What racking agonies rend their distracted hearts? the bloody axe and torturing wheel, are ease, are downe, compared with their prodigious woe. And (O holy GOD! wonderful in thy doings! fearful in thy judgments!) even this prodigious woe is the *gentlest* of visitations, compared with that indignation and

* Rev. xx. 11.

† Rev. xxi. 11.

wrath, which are hanging over their guilty heads—which are even now falling on all the sons of rebellion—which will plunge them deep in aggravated misery and endless destruction.

And is there a last day ? and must there come,

A sure, a fix'd, irrevocable doom ?

Surely then, to use the words of a pious prelate*, it should be “ the main care of our lives and deaths, what shall give us peace and acceptation with GOD. What but righteousness ? What righteousness or whose ? Ours, in the inherent graces wrought in us, in the holy works wrought by us ? Or CHRIST’s, in his most perfect obedience, and meritorious satisfaction, wrought for us, and applied to us ? The *Popish* faction is the former. We Protestants are for the latter. GOD is as direct on our side, as his word can make him ; every where blazoning the defects of our own righteousness, every where extolling the perfect obedience of our REDEEMER’s.”

Behold ! says the everlasting KING, I lay in Sion, for a foundation, a stone ; a tried stone ; a precious corner-stone ; a sure foundation : He that believeth, shall not make haste †. As this text contains so noble a display of our SAVIOUR’s consummate ability for his great work ; as it is admirably calculated, to preserve the mind from distressing fears, and to settle it in a steady tranquility ; you will give me leave to touch it cursorily with my pen. Just as I should descant upon it in conversation, was I now sitting in one of your agreeable arbors, and enjoining your agreeable company.

How beautiful the gradation ! how lively the description ! and how very important the practical improvement ! Or I might say, the inscription which is engraven on this wonderful stone.—Behold ! intended to rouse and fix our most attentive regard. The GOD of heaven speaks. He speaks and every syllable is balm ; every sentence is rich with consolation. If ever therefore we have ears to hear, let it be to this SPEAKER, and on this occasion.

* Bishop Mell.

† Isai xxviii. 16.

A stone. Every thing else is sliding sand ; is yielding air ! is a breaking bubble. Wealth will prove a vain shadow ; honor an empty breath ; pleasure a delusory dream ; our own righteousness a spider's web. If on these we rely, disappointment must ensue, and shame be inevitable. Nothing but CHRIST, nothing but CHRIST, can stably support our spiritual interest, and realize our expectation of true happiness. And blessed be the divine goodness ! He is for this purpose, not a stone only, but

A tried stone. Tried in the days of his humanity, by all the vehemence of temptations, and all the weight of affliction : yet, like gold from the furnace, rendered more shining and illustrious by the fiery scrutiny.—Tried, under the capacity of a SAVIOUR, by millions and millions of depraved, wretched, ruined creatures ; who have always found him perfectly able, and as perfectly willing, to expiate the enormous guilt—to deliver from the most inveterate corruptions—and save, to the very uttermost, all that come unto GOD through him.

A corner stone. Which not only sustains, but unites the edifice : incorporating both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, believers of various languages, and manifold denominations—here, in one harmonious bond of brotherly love—hereafter in one common participation of eternal joy.

A precious stone. More precious than rubies ; the pearl of great price ! and the desire of all nations. Precious with regard to the divine dignity of his person, and the unequalled excellency of his mediatorial offices. In these, and in all respects greater than *Jonah*—wiser than *Solomon*—fairer than the children of men—chiefest among ten thousand—and to the awakened sinner or enlightened believer, altogether lovely*.

A sure foundation. Such as no pressure can shake : equal more than equal, to every weight ; even to sin, the heaviest load in the world.—*The rock of ages* ; such as never, has failed, never will fail, those humble penitents, who cast

their burden upon the **LORD REDEEMER** ; who roll all their guilt, and fix all their hopes, on this immoveable basis. Or as the words may be rendered *A foundation* * ! *A foundation* ! There is a fine spirit of vehemency in the sentence, thus understood. It speaks the language of exultation, and expresses an important discovery. That which mankind infinitely want ; that which multitudes seek, and are not able to find ; it is here ! it is here ! This, this is the foundation for their pardon, their peace, their eternity.

Whosoever believeth, though pressed with adversity, or surrounded with dangers, *shall not make haste*. But free from tumultuous and perplexing thoughts, preserved from rash and precipitate steps, he shall possess his soul in patience. Knowing the sufficiency of those merits, and the fidelity of that grace, on which he has reposed his confidence, shall quietly and without perturbation wait for an expected end.—And not only amidst the perilous or disastrous changes of life, but even in the day of everlasting judgement, such persons shall stand with boldness. They shall look up, to the grand **ARBITRATOR**—look round on all the solemnity of his appearance—look forward, to the unalterable sentence—and neither feel anxiety, nor fear damnation.

Such, in that day of terrors, shall be seen

To face the thunders with a godlike mien.

The Planets drop ; their thoughts are fix'd above :

The centre shakes ; their hearts disdain to move.

This portion of scripture, which, I hope, will both delight and edify my friend, recalls our attention to the subject of my present letter—to those propitiatory sufferings, and that justifying righteousness, which, imputed to sinners, are the ground of their comfort, and the bulwark of their security.—We have heard Moses and the prophets. What say the writers of the New Testament ? They, whose up-

* *Fundamentum solidissimum.*

derstandings were opened by the "WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR," to discern the meaning of the antient oracles. Who must therefore be the most competent judges of their true import, and our surest guides in settling sense.—Do they patronize our interpretation of the prophecies? Do they set their seal to the authenticity of our doctrine?

St. Luke, in his ecclesiastical history, has preserved this weighty declaration of the Apostles; *We believe that, thro' the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, we shall be saved, even as they* *. Here the thing is implied.—St. Peter, in the introduction to one of his theological epistles, thus addressed his happy correspondents: *To them that have obtained like precious faith, in the righteousness † of our GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST*. Here the point is expressly asserted.—With equal clearness is the doctrine delivered by Matthew the Evangelist; *Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness ‡*. What can the kingdom of GOD mean? An experience of the power, and an enjoyment of the privileges of the gospel. What are we to understand by his righteousness? Surely, the righteousness which is worthy of this grand appellation, and peculiar to that blessed institution.

Would we learn, what is the great and distinguishing peculiarity of the gospel? St. Paul informs us; *Therein the righteousness of GOD is revealed, from faith, to faith*. As this text leads us into the epistle to the Romans—as this epistle is, both for the propriety of its method, and for the importance of its doctrine, singularly excellent—it may not be amiss, to examine its structure, and enquire into its design.

The Apostle writes to a promiscuous people: who had been converted, partly from *Judaism*, partly from *Gentilism*. His aim is, to strike at the very root of their former errors respectively—to turn them wholly to the superabundant

* Acts xv. 11.

† 2 Pet. i. 3.

‡ Matt. vi. 33.

grace of GOD, and establish them solely on the all-sufficient merits of CHRIST.

The *Gentiles* were, for the most part, grossly ignorant of GOD, and stupidly negligent of invisible interests. If any among them had any regard to the DEITY; their virtues, they imagined, were meritorious of all that the DEITY could bestow. If they committed sin; sin, they supposed might easily be expiated by sacrifices*. A few of their judicious sages taught, that the most probable means of obtaining pardon, was a sincere reformation of life.

The *Jews*, as it is well known, placed a mighty dependence on their affinity to Abraham, and the covenant made with their fathers; on their adherence to the letter of the moral law, and their scrupulous performance of ceremonial institutions.—*Gentiles* and *Jews* agreeing in this mistake, that they looked for the pardon of guilt, and the attainment of happiness, from some services done, or some qualities acquired by *themselves*.

Against these errors the zealous Apostle draws his pen. He enters the lists like a true champion of CHRIST, in the most spirited and heroic manner imaginable. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST*: for, however it may be deemed foolishness by the polite *Greeks*, or prove a stumbling-block to the carnal *Jews*, it is the power of GOD unto † *salvation*: it is the grand instrument, which he has ordained for this blessed purpose, and which he will certainly crown with the desired success.—Whence has the gospel this very peculiar power? Because, therein a *righteousness is revealed*; not demanded of impotent sinners, but revealed and made ready for their free acceptance. A true and perfect righteousness, which obliterates all guilt, and furnishes a solid title to eternal life.—What righteousness is this? The righteousness, not of sincerity, but of perfection; not of man, but of GOD. Which was promised by GOD in the scriptures; was introduced by GOD in the person of his SON;

* *Witall animadvertiones Irenice, Cap. vii.*

† *Rom. i. 16*

and, on account of its consummate excellency, is both acceptable and available in his sight.

This righteousness is *from faith to faith* * : held forth, as it were, by a promising GOD, and apprehended by a believing soul. Who, first, gives a firm *assent* to the gospel; then, cordially *accepts* its blessings. From a conviction that the doctrine is true, passes to a persuasion that the privileges are his own.—When this is effected, a foundation is laid for all happiness; a principle is wrought, to produce all holiness.

But why was it requisite, that such a righteousness should be provided by GOD, and revealed in the gospel?—Because not *Gentile*, nor *Jew*, either possessed, or could attain, any righteousness of their own: and this righteousness, though so absolutely necessary for their fallen state, was infinitely remote from all human apprehensions. The latter assertion is self-evident. The former is particularly demonstrated.—First, with regard to the Gentiles. The generality of whom, were abandoned to the most scandalous excesses of vice; and they who had escaped the grosser pollutions, fell short in the duties of natural religion.—Next, with regard to the Jews. Many of whom lived in open violation of the external commandment! and not one of them acted up to the internal purity, required by the Mosaic precepts.—From which premises, this conclusion is deduced; that each of them had transgressed *even their own* rule of action; that all of them were, on this account, utterly inexcusable; therefore *by the works of the law*, whether dictated by reason, or delivered by *Moses*, *no mortal is justified* † in the sight of GOD.

Lest any should imagine, that righteousness may be obtained, if not by a conformity to the law of nature, or the law of Moses, yet by an evangelical obedience, he farther declares; that sinners are *justified freely*, without any regard to their own endowments, of what kind soever; *through the redemption*, the complete redemption of JESUS

* Rom. i. 17.

† Rom. iii. 20.

CHRIST*. After such a manner, as may lay them low in humiliation, even while it exalts them to the kingdom of heaven. After such a manner, as may bring life and salvation to their souls, while it strips them of all pretence to glorifying ; and consigns the whole honor to GOD the FATHER, and his SON JESUS CHRIST.

Upon the whole ; here are three positions, of the last importance—Salvation is by righteousness—Righteousness —Righteousness is by faith—Only by faith, whether to the Jew, or to the Gentile. All these particulars are confirmed by that single sentence, quoted from the Prophet ; the just, the truly righteous ; *shall live*, shall inherit everlasting life ; not by his own works, but *by faith* in the obedience of a SAVIOUR.

In the prosecution of this very momentous subject, our sacred disputant removes an objection, which is as common as it is plausible. *Do we make the law void through faith ? Do we render it a vain institution ; such as never has been never will be fulfilled ?—GOD forbid !* This were a flagrant dishonor to the divine LEGISLATOR and his holy commandments. What we would utterly abhor, rather than countenance in any degree. On the contrary, *we establish the law†* ; not only as we receive it for a rule of life, but as we except no salvation without a proper, without a *perfect* conformity to its injunctions.—How can this be effected ? By qualifying its sense, and softening it into an easier system ? This were to vacate the law ; to deprive it of its honor, and its end. *Its honor* ; which is the most refined spirituality, and sublime perfection : *its end* ; which is to convince of sin, and make way for a SAVIOUR. We establish the law by an incomparably better expedient ; by believing in that great MEDIATOR, who has obeyed its every precept ; sustained its whole penalty ; and satisfied all its requirements, in their utmost latitude.

Farther to corroborate his scheme, he proves it from the renowned examples of Abraham and David. The instance

* Rom. iii. 24.

† Rom. iii. 21. An incontestable proof, that the Apostle treats of the moral law.

of Abraham is so clear, that it wants no comment. Any paraphrase would rather obscure, than illustrate it. The other, derived from the testimony of the *Psalmist*, may admit the commentator's tool. Yet not to hammer it into a new form, but only to clear away the rubbish ; to rescue it from misrepresentation ; and place it in a true light. Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works, saying ; " Blessed are they, whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and " whose sins are covered: blessed is the man, to whom the " LORD will not impute sin *." Here is *imputation* asserted—The imputation of *righteousness*—Of righteousness *without works* ; without any respect to, or any co-operation from, any kind of human works. It is a blessing vouchsafed to the ungodly ; not founded on a freedom from sin, but procuring a remission of its guilt.

Some I know, have attempted to resolve all the force of of this passage, into an argument for the sameness of pardon and justifying righteousness. Whereas the Apostle undertakes to prove, not that pardon and justifying righteousness are identically the same ; but that justification, in its branches, and in its full extent, is absolutely free. To maintain which position, he argues—" This doctrine is as true, " as it is comfortable. It agrees with the experience, and " has received the attestation of David. When he speaks " of the blessed and happy man, he describes him, not as " one that has been innocent, but guilty: not as having " any claim to the divine favour, on account of deserving " performances, or recommending properties ; but as owing " all his acceptance to that sovereign grace, which forgives " iniquities, and blots out sin. Such is the case with regard " to that evangelical justification, which we preach. Even " as ; it is, in the manner of its vouchsafement, perfectly " similar to the blessedness celebrated by the *Psalmist*." The Apostle's eye, is not so directly upon the nature of the privilege, as upon the *freeness* with which it is granted. Nor can any infer from the tenour of his reasoning, that to

be forgiven, is the same as to be made righteous; only that both are acts of infinitely rich mercy; designed for sinners; promised to sinners; bestowed on sinners. Who have nothing, nothing of their own, either to boast, or to plead, or so much as pretend.

In the fifth chapter, from verse the twelfth to the end, the sacred penman points out the *cause*, and explains the *method* of justification, of which this is the sum.—That *CHRIST*, in pursuance of the covenant of grace, fulfilled all righteousness in the stead of his people.—That this righteousness, being performed for them, is imputed to them.—That, by virtue of this gracious imputation, they are absolved from guilt, and entitled to bliss; as thoroughly absolved, and as fully intitled, as if in their own persons they had undergone the expiatory sufferings, and yielded the meritorious obedience.—Lest it should seem strange, in the opinion of a *Jew* or a *Gentile*, to hear of being justified by the righteousness of another, the wary Apostle urges a parallel case; recorded in the *Jewish* revelation, but ratified by *universal* * experience; namely, our being condemned for the unrighteousness of another.—In this respect, he observes, Adam was a type of our LORD; or, a figure of *HIM* that was to come†. The relations the same, but the effects happily reversed. Adam the head of his posterity; *CHRIST* the head of his people. Adam's was imputed to all his natural descendants; *CHRIST*'s righteousness is imputed to all his spiritual offspring. Adam's transgression brought death into the world, and all our woe; *CHRIST*'s obedience brings life and all our happiness.—The whole closes with this very obvious and no less weighty inference; therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life||.

I do not recollect any other similitude, which the Apostle so minutely sifts, and so copiously unfolds. He explains

* By the pains and death which infants, in every nation, endure. Which are unquestionably punishments, and to which they are doomed by the righteous judgement of GOD.

† Rom. v. 14.

|| Rom. v. 18.

it; he applies it; he resumes it; he dwells upon it; and scarcely knows how to desist from it. I am sure, you will not blame me, if I imitate the sacred author; if I revert to the subject; and quote another passage, from the same paragraph. "Much more shall they, who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, in life by one, JESUS CHRIST*."

I was once inclined to think, that the inspired writer specifies, in this place 'what I apprehended to be the two grand blessings, procured by IMMANUEL) *remission of sins, and imputation of righteousness*. But this notion, though not without its patrons, now appears incorrect and groundless. The imputation of CHRIST's righteousness is, not a part, but the cause—the whole entire cause of our pardon, our peace, our complete justification. And this righteousness, the Apostle declares, is of grace. It made ours, not on account of any deeds or duties, which we perform; but from the *abundance of grace*, which GOD dispenses.—It is called a gift. Every gift implies something, not originally our own, but another's. This gift must signify, not what we ourselves have acquired, but what was fulfilled by our SURETY; and is by an act of heavenly indulgence, consigned over to our enjoyment. Accordingly, they who are interested in this blessing, are styled, not *workers*, but *receivers*; not purchasers, but *heirs*, of the righteousness which is by faith.

See the distinguished pre-eminence and richness of the gospel! Philosophy proposed many refined precepts of righteousness, but could not bestow a righteousness upon any person. The *law* of GOD itself, though the perfect rule of all righteousness, is weak through the flesh, and cannot make the comers thereunto righteous. Whereas, by the *gospel*, we are not only taught the true justifying righteousness, but it is *given* to us, and put upon us.—Nay; we have it in *abundance*; in its most consummate form, and

high perfection. So that neither man shall be able to wish, nor can GOD himself require, a greater or a better.—This is a wonderful saying, but it will appear true, if we consider another clause from this incomparable chapter. Suffer me, therefore, to bring forth another jewel, from this rich treasury of the gospel. And the rather, as the jewel, which I am going to produce, was the first that beamed light and lustre upon my own mind. Was the first happy occasion of guiding my feet into the way of truth. *As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous* *. The *disobedience of one*, is the disobedience of Adam; his actual transgression of the divine law. Hereby *many were made sinners*, even before they had done any evil work. Sinners, in such a sense, as to become obnoxious unto condemnation, and justly liable to death.—All this, I think, is from the Apostle's own words, indisputable. If we would preserve the propriety of his anthesis, or the force of his reasoning, we must allow; that the *obedience of one*, is the obedience of CHRIST; his actual and complete performances of the whole law. Hereby, *many are made righteous*, even before they have done any good work. Righteous, in such a sense, as to be secure from all condemnation; and, on principles of justice, entitled to life eternal.—How clear and easy is this meaning! How regular and exact this argumentation! What subtilty of evasion must be used, before you can give a different turn to the instructive text.

This is the most consistent sense, in which I can understand *Rom. viii. 5. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT*. That the righteousness, required by the holy but broken law, might be thoroughly accomplished. Accomplished in our nature, and by our REPRESENTATIVE. So as to be deemed, in point of legal estimation, fulfilled for us and by us †. This I say, is most consistent

* Rom. v. 19.

† Matt. v. 34. Heb. i. 1.

with the tenour of St. *Paul's* arguing, and with the import of his language.—*With the tenour of his arguing*: for, he undertakes to demonstrate the *impossibility* of our justification, by any personal conformity to the law. Whereas, if we could satisfy its penalty, and obey its precepts; or, in other words, fulfil its righteousness; this impossibility would cease.—*With the import of his language*: for, the original phrase denotes, not a *sincere*, but a *complete* obedience; not what we are enabled to perform, but what the law has a right to demand. Which, every one must acknowledge, is not fulfilled in any mere man, since the fall; but was fulfilled by JESUS CHRIST, for our good, and in our stead. This interpretation preserves the sentence distinct, and makes a very natural introduction for the following clause: where the persons interested in this privilege, are described by their fruits, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT*. Implying, that justification and sanctification are, like the *ever-corresponding* motion of our eyes, inseparable concomitants; and we vainly pretend to the former, if we continue destitute of the latter.

We have produced proofs of our doctrine.—We have heard an Apostle declaring the assured happiness, and complete justification of *true believers*.—Let us now observe the same sagacious judge of men and things, discovering the danger of those *self-justiciaries*, who reject the REDEEMER's righteousness.

He is filled with the darkest apprehensions, concerning his bretheren the *Jews*. He is impressed with melancholy presages, relating to their eternal state*.—What was the cause of this tender solicitude? Had they cast alioff religion and given themselves over to gross immoralities? On the contrary, they were worshippers of the true GOD; and had, in their way, not only a *regard*, but a *zeal* for his honor†.—Wherefore then does this compassionate Father in *Israel* feel the same trembling uneasiness for his kinsmen according to the flesh, as *Eli* felt for the endangered ark? Himself assigns the reason. Because, *they being ignorant*

* Rom. ix. 2.

† Rom. x. 2.

of GOD's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of GOD*. Not knowing that immaculate holiness, which the perfect nature, and equally perfect law of the most high GOD, require—being wilfully ignorant of that consummate obedience which an incarnate GOD vouchsafed to perform, for the justification of them, who are without strength—they established, or rather they went about; they sedulously but foolishly endeavoured, to establish their own righteousness; to make it, scanty and decrepit as it was, the basis of all their hopes.—Thus were they resting their everlasting ALL on a bottom, not precarious only, but irreparably ruinous. A boundless eternity the fabrick! yet they built wonder to heavens!) on the foam of the waters! and (which added stubbornness to their folly) in avowed contempt of *the righteousness which is by faith*; that strong and sure foundation, laid by GOD's own almighty hand in *Sion*.—For this, the good apostle was afflicted, with “great heaviness, and continual sorrow.” For this, he made the prophet's pathetic complaint his own; *oh! that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might bewail, day and night* †, the incorrigible perverseness of my people! *for my people have committed two evils: in not thankfully submitting to the righteousness of GOD, they have forsaken the fountain of living waters: in attempting to establish their own righteousness, they have hewed themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water* ‡.

Having shewed *their fatal error*, he strengthens his representation, by displaying the happy success of the *Gentiles*—*what shall we say then?* this, however improbable it may seem, we confidently affirm, *that the Gentiles who follow not after righteousness; who had no knowledge of it, and no concern about it; even they have attained to righteousness*,—Strange assertion! how is this possible! to be sure, the righteousness which they attained, could not result from a-

* Rom. x. 3

† Jer. ix. 1.

‡ Jer. ii. 13.

ny thing personal; could not consist in moral virtues or religious duties. Instead of practising moral virtues, or performing religious duties, they lay immersed in sensuality, and were abandoned to idolatry. It must therefore be the evangelical, the imputed righteousness; *even that which was wrought by CHRIST, and is received by faith* *.

Israel, in the mean time, the nominal *Israel*, who, with great pretensions to sanctity, and many costly oblations, followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Attained! they have done nothing less. They are fallen vastly short of it; they are pronounced guilty by it; they stand condemned before it.—Wherefore did they so grosly mistake, and so grievously miscarry; especially, as they were both sincere and assiduous in their pursuit. Because, they forsook the good old way, in which *Abraham, David*, and their pious ancestors walked. They adopted a new scheme; and must needs substitute their own, instead of relying on a SAVIOUR's righteousness.—They sought for justification, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law †. A method, which their fathers knew not; which their GOD ordained not; and which proved, as it always will prove, not only abortive, but destructive.—At this stone they stumbled. On this rock they split. Let their ruin be a way-mark, and the Apostle's observation a light-house to my Theron.

Our zealous writers tries every expedient. He mingles hope with terror. Having pointed out the rock, on which the *Israelites* suffered shipwreck; he directs us to the haven, in which sinners may cast anchor, and find safety. He gives us a fine descriptive view of the *christian's* complete happiness. He opens (if I may continue the metaphor) a free and ample port for perishing souls. Not formed by a neck of land, or a ridge of mountains, but by a magnificent

* Surely, the righteousness which is by faith, cannot consist "in humbly committing the soul to CHRIST, in the way that he hath appointed." According to this notion, the justifying righteousness would spring from ourselves; would be constituted by an act of our own, and not by the perfect obedience of our LORD.

† Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32.

chain of spiritual blessings. All proceeding from; all terminating in, that precious corner stone **JESUS CHRIST**. *Who of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**. *Wisdom*, to enlighten our ignorant minds. *Righteousness* †, to justify our guilty persons. *Sanctification*, †, to renew our depraved natures. *Redemption*, to rescue us from all evil; and render us, both in body and soul, perfectly and eternally happy.—Let it be remarked, how carefully our inspired writer sets aside all *sufficiency*, as well as all *merit* in man. He represents the whole of our salvation, both in its procurement and application, as a work of freest grace. **CHRIST** is, and not we ourselves, the author of this glorious restoration, the cause of this great felicity. *He is made all this unto us*—How? Not by our own resolution and strength; but *of GOD*, by the agency of his mighty power, and blessed **SPIRIT**. He shews us the all-sufficient fulness of **CHRIST**. He brings us with ardent longings to **CHRIST**. He implants us into **CHRIST**, and makes us partakers of his merits.

In the process of the same epistle, the sacred penman enumerates the *constituent parts* of that great salvation which the SON of GOD has procured for ruined sinners. *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD*‡. Ye are *washed*; washed in redeeming blood, and cleansed from all the filthiness of your iniquities. Ye are *sanctified*; renewed in the propensity of your mind, and fitted for a life of universal holiness. Ye are *justified*; wholly delivered from wrath, and restored to a state of complete acceptance with the KING of heaven. All these gifts and prerogatives are conferred upon the unworthy sinner, in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; in consideration of his atoning death and meritorious righteousness. By the **SPIRIT** of our GOD; through the efficacy of his operation, revealing **CHRIST**, and working faith in the heart.

* 1 Cor. i. 30.

† † Righteousness and sanctification; the former imputed, the latter inherent.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 11.

Read Rom. x. 4. Some gentlemen have talked of a new remedial law. Whereas, the apostle speaks of the old, the unalterable, the *Mosaic* * law.—What is the end of this sacred inviolable rule? Is fallen man, or the GOD Man? If the former, then the law must be an abortive scheme, and never obtain its proper accomplishment. If the latter, then it receives all due obedience, and is satisfied to the very uttermost. Therefore CHRIST is the end of the law.—And wherefore? For righteousness; not that the law should be set aside, but that a justifying righteousness might be wrought out. How is this to be done? Not merely by suffering its penalty, but also by fulfilling its command. According to that saying, whoso doeth them shall live, shall be entitled to eternal life, by them.—Is this obedience to be performed by us, or by our SURETY; By our SURETY, no doubt. Since the apostle is arguing in professed opposition to all deeds of our own; and tells us, that the justifying righteousness is to be had, not by our obeying but by our believing; it is to every one that believeth.

Follow the course of a river; it will constantly lead you to the ocean. Trace the veins of the body; they invariably unite in the heart. Mark likewise the tendency of the law, it no less constantly and invariably conducts you to CHRIST, as the center of its views and the consummation of its demands.—The moral law aims at discovering our guilt, and demonstrating our inexpressible need of a SAVIOUR. The ceremonial points him out, as suffering in our stead; making reconciliation for iniquity; and purging away every defilement with his blood.—They both direct the wretched transgressor, to renounce himself, and fly to the REDEEMER. Who alone has paid that perfect obedience, and brought in that everlasting righteousness, which the sinner wants. and the law exacts. Who is, therefore the only proper accomplishment of the one, and the only suitable supply for the other.

What is the grand design of the whole scriptures? St. Paul, asserting their divine origin, and displaying the graci-

ous purposes, which they are intended to serve, writes thus: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD; and is profitable—for doctrine, to declare and establish religious truth,—for reproof, to convince of sin, and to refute error—for correction*, or renovation of the heart and reformation of the life—for instruction in righteousness, in that righteousness, which could never have been learned from any other book, and in which alone sinful men may appear with comfort before their GOD†.*

We have seen the principle scope of the law, and the leading design of the Scriptures: let us add one enquiry more. What is the chief office of the SPIRIT?—If all these coincide, and uniformly terminate in the imputed righteousness of CHRIST; we have a confirmation of its reality and excellence, great as men can desire; I had almost said, great as GOD can impart.—What says our LORD upon this point? When he, the SPIRIT of truth is come, shall convince the world of *sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe in me: of righteousness, because I go to my FATHER, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*—Is it possible for words to be more *weighty and comprehensive*? Here is a summary of christian faith, and of christian holiness. Not that superficial holiness, which is patched up of devotional forms, and goes no further than external performances: but that which is vital, and springs from the heart consists in power, not in mere profession; whose praise, if not of men, who are smitten with pompous outsides, is sure to be of GOD, who distinguishes the things which are excellent.

He shall convince the world of sin; of original and actual sin. The sin of their nature, as well as the sin of their life; the sin of their best deeds, no less than of their criminal commissions, and blameable omissions. Above all, of their sinning against the sovereign, the only remedy, by unbelief;

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

† “Was there ever such a comment before?” says Vadius. “The plain meaning is, for training up in holiness of heart and life.”

because they believe not on one.—He shall convince of righteousness; of the exalted REDEEMER's righteousness, which the foregoing conviction must render peculiarly welcome. Convince them, that it was wrought out in behalf of disobedient and defective mortals; that it is absolutely perfect, and sufficient to justify even the most ungodly.—Of all which an incontestable proof is given, by his resurrection from the dead, his triumphant ascension into heaven, and session at the right-hand of his FATHER, *because I go to my FATHER, and ye see me no more* *.—He shall convince of judgment. Those, who are humbled under a sense of guilt, and justified through an imputed righteousness shall be taught by happy experience, that *the prince of this world is condemned* and dethroned in their hearts: that their souls, by virtue of this victorious faith, are rescued from the tyranny of satan; are delivered from the bondage of their corruptions; and restored to the liberty—the glorious liberty of the children of GOD

You wonder, perhaps, that I have not strengthened my cause, by any quotation from the epistle to the *Galatians*. What I design, my dear *Theron*, is not to accumulate, but to select arguments. However, that I may disappoint an expectation so reasonable, I proceed to lay before you a very nervous passage, from that masterly piece of sacred controversy.—Only, let me just observe, that the epistle was written to persons, who had embraced christianity, and professed an affiance in CHRIST. But would fain have circumcision, would fain have their own religious duties, to the merits of their SAVIOUR; in order to constitute, at least, part of their justifying righteousness. Against which error, the vigilant and indefatigable assertor of the truth as it is in JESUS, remonstrates—“ We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man

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* If the work had been imperfect in any degree, our REDEEMER, instead of taking up his stated and final residence in the regions of glory must have descended again into this inferior world, to complete what was deficient. Therefore, his sitting at the right hand of GOD, is a most comfortable evidence, that he has thoroughly performed his commission; has fully satisfied for sin; and brought in the all-perfected righteousness.

" is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of JESUS CHRIST, even we have believed in JESUS CHRIST; that we might be justified by the faith of CHRIST, and not by the works of the law; for, by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified *."

We, who are Jews by nature; are the descendents of Abraham, and GOD's peculiar people; have the tables of his law, and the ordinances of his workmanship: we who, in point of privileges, are greatly superior to the Gentile nations, and have all possible advantages for establishing (if such a thing were practicable) a righteousness of our own; what have we done?—We have believed in JESUS CHRIST: we have renounced ourselves; disclaimed whatever is our own; and depended wholly on the blood and obedience of the glorious IMMANUEL.—For what end? that by this faith in CHRIST, which receives his righteousness; pleads his righteousness; and presents nothing but his infinitely noble righteousness before the throne, we might be justified.—What motive has induced us to this practice?—A firm persuasion, that by the works of the law, by sincere obedience, or personal holiness, no man living has been, and no man living can be, justified before GOD.

Are you tired, Theron? have I fatigued your attention, instead of convincing your judgment?—I will not harbour such a suspicion. It is pleasing to converse with those, who have traveled into foreign countries, and seen the wonders of creation. We hearken to their narratives with delight. Every new adventure whets our curiosity, rather than palls our appetite. Must it not then afford a more sublime satisfaction, to be entertained with the discourses of a person, who had, not indeed sailed round the world, but made a journey to the *third heavens*? Who had been admitted into the *paradise* of GOD, and heard things of infinite importance, and unutterable dignity? This was the privilege of that incomparable man, whose observations and discoveries, I have been presenting to my friend. And I promise myself, he will not complain of weariness, if I

enrich my epistle with one or two more of those glorious truths.

GOD hath made HIM to be sin for us who knew no sin ; that we might, not be put into a capacity of acquiring a righteousness of our own, but be made the righteousness of GOD in him.* In this text, the *double* imputation of our sin to CHRIST, and of CHRIST's righteousness to us, is most emphatically taught, and most charmingly contrasted.—Most *emphatically taught*. For, we are said, not barely to be made righteous, but to be made righteousness; itself; and not righteousness only, but (which is the utmost that language can reach) the righteousness of GOD. Most *charmingly contrasted*. For, one cannot but ask, in what manner, CHRIST was made sin! In the very same manner, we are made righteousness. CHRIST knew no *actual* sin. Yet, upon his mediatorial interposition on our behalf, he was treated by divine justice, as a sinful person. We likewise are destitute of all legal righteousness. Yet, upon our receiving CHRIST, and believing in his name, we are regarded by the divine MAJESTY, as righteous creatures. This therefore cannot, in either case, be intrinsically; but must be, in both instances, imputatively.—Gracious divinely gracious exchange! pregnant with inestimable benefits. The incessant triumph of the strong, the sovereign consolation of the weak believer!

Cease your exultation, cries one, and come down from your altitudes. The term used in this verse denotes not so properly sin, as an offering for sin.—This is a mere supposal which I may as reasonably deny, as an another affirm. Since the word occurs much more frequently in the former signification, than in the latter; and since by giving it the latter signification in the passage before us, we very much impair, if not totally destroy, the Apostle's beautiful antithesis.

However; not to contend, but to follow the remark. I borrow my reply from a brave old champion † for the truths

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

† See Dr. Paul's annotation on the place, in that valuable piece of antient controversy and criticism, "The Examplication of the Rheinish Testament."

of the gospel: "This text, says he, invincibly proveth, that we are not justified in **GOD's** sight by righteousness inherent in us, but by the righteousness of **CHRIST** imputed to us through faith." After which he adds, what I make my answer to the objections; "that **CHRIST** was made for us; because he was a sacrifice for sin, we confess: but therefore was he a sacrifice for sin, because our sin was imputed to him, and punished in him."—The poor delinquents under the Mosaic dispensation, who brought their sin-offering to the altar of the **LORD**, were directed to lay their hand on the head of the devoted beast. Signifying by this usage, a transferring of sin from the offerer to the sacrifice. Conformably to the import of this ceremony; **CHRIST** assumed our demerit. Like a true peculiar victim, he suffered the punishment, which we had deserved; and which, without such a commutation, we must have undergone. So that our **LORD's** being made a sin-offering for us, does by no means invalidate, but very much confirm our doctrine. It necessarily implies the translation of our iniquity to his person; and on the principles of analogy, must infer the imputation of his righteousness to our souls.

One passage more permit me to transcribe into my paper; and at the same time, to wish, that it may be written on both our hearts. Written not with ink and pen; nor with the point of a diamond; but with the finger of the living **GOD**. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of **CHRIST JESUS** my **LORD**; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win **CHRIST**, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of **CHRIST**, the righteousness which is of **GOD** through faith*.

This is a passage of special eminence, as well as of singular importance. For which reason, you will allow me to be somewhat circumstantial, in examining its meaning,

force, and evidence. The Apostle is here relating his own experience, and exhibiting himself as a pattern for christians. He shews, what was the present frame, and what the prevailing exercise of his spirit, with regard to the momentous affair of justification before GOD.

Justification! says a certain author; no, "by referring the text to justification only, you miserably pervert the whole scope of the words. It manifestly relates to sanctification chiefly, if not to that only."

Then we are directed to find our *rejoicing*; and to fix our confidence for eternal life (of these things the apostle is manifestly speaking) in sanctification chiefly, if not in that only; not in what CHRIST has done and suffered, but in that which we ourselves do and possess. The Papists will thank us for such a concession. It makes room for their notion of merit. But can never exalt grace, or exclude boasting.

According to his interpretation, we should all be desirous to appear, at the great and terrible day, in the garments of sanctification chiefly, if not in those only. But are these without spot and blemish? will these present us *faultless* before the throne of GOD's glory? hide me, ye rocks! cover me, ye mountains; much rather than expose me, in such an array, before the eye of infinite purity.

Nay; if this be the mind of the apostle, then we must count all other things, even the blood and righteousness of our incarnate GOD, to be undesirable as loss, and despicable as dung. Dreadful consequence! not to be mentioned without shuddering! yet into such consequences we are inevitably led, by this too peremptory and unadvised exposition of the text.

But we have not so learned CHRIST. We think, the apostle expresses a vehement desire, and manifests a most attentive care, that he may remain established on the true justifying righteousness. A point, he well knew, of inexpressible moment. In which mankind are unaccountably prone to mistake. Nay, *Paul* himself had stumbled at this stumbling stone; imagining that righteousness to be unto life, which was productive of nothing but condemnation and death. He therefore speaks with earnestness; he acts

with circumspection ; as a person who had been once caught in the snare, but is resolved not to be entangled a gain.

Perhaps, you will say ; I do not wonder to hear him repudiate his old pharisaical, spurious righteousness. But does he give the bill of divorce to his new, his *christian*, his real righteousness ? That which is proceeded from grace shed abroad in his heart ; and produced those heavenly tempers and holy works which were both pleasing to GOD and honorable to religion ?

I answer ; he had *no other* righteousness to renounce for the sake of CHRIST ; since, as you justly observe, his former pharisaical strictness was spurious, not real godliness. This he had long ago learned to call by another name ; Looking upon it, as so much specious sinfulness, or as a splendid abomination. By *his own righteousness*, therefore, he must mean, whatever he possessed or performed, in conformity to the law as a rule of life, and through the influence of grace as a principle of life. Against all this, whether it consisted of good deeds or devout qualities, he enters his protestation. Enters it, in those strong words, *not having mine own righteousness*. Not having it even once in my thoughts ; not casting so much as a single glance toward it, but being just as if I had never yielded any obedience at all.

And great reason there was, for using all this jealousy. Since nothing is more natural to us in, all estates, than *self-confidence*. While we are destitute of grace, we are almost sure to trust in outward duties, and what is called a moral righteousness. When we are renewed by grace, alas ! how prone are we to doat upon the beauties of our sanctification ; and look with the *oculo irretorto*, singly and solely to CHRIST, as our justifying righteousness !

In determined opposition to such very pernicious errors, the apostle speaks to this effect—" The privilege of being a *Hebrew* by birth ; the prerogative of being a *Pharisee* by profession ; together with a behaviour exemplary, and a reputation unblameable in the sight of men ; all these, which were once my plea for heaven, and therefore reckoned my highest gain ; as soon as I became acquainted

“ with the glorious perfections of *CHRIST*, I counted loss
 “ for him.—And now, though I have been a *Disciple* many
 “ years ; have walked in all holy conversations and god-
 “ liness ; have endured, for my divine MASTER’s name,
 “ tribulations above measure ; have laboured more success-
 “ fully than all the Apostles ; yet even these and *all other at-*
 “ *tainments*, of that kind or of what date soever, I count
 “ but loss, for the transcendant excellency of *CHRIST*
 “ *JESUS* my LORD.—*Yea doubtless* ; it is my deliberate
 “ and stedfast resolution ; what I have most seriously a-
 “ dopted, and do publicly avow ; that, specious as all hu-
 “ man righteousness may seem, and valuable as it may be
 “ in other respects ; I both do, and ever shall, treat it with
 “ disdain ; yea trample it under my feet, that I may win
 “ *CHRIST*, and triumph in the exalted *JESUS*. Hu-
 “ man righteousness fades into nothing ; it dwindles into
 “ *less than nothing* ; if set in competition with his match-
 “ less obedience. And should it supersede my application
 “ to his merits, or weaken my reliance on his mediation, it
 “ would *then* be, not contemptible only, but injurious—to
 “ be avoided, with solicitude, as the greatest loss ; to be
 “ rejected, with abhorrence, as the vilest *dung*.”

You will ask, if he rejects all his own righteousness, on
 what are his hopes fixed ?—On a foundation, *extensive* as
 the obedience of the REDEEMER’s life and death, *unshaken*
 as the dignity of his eternal power and GODHEAD.
 They are fixed on *the righteousness which is of GOD* ; the
 righteousness which GOD the FATHER, in unsearchable
 wisdom, provided ; and which GOD the SON, in unutter-
 able goodness, wrought.—Do you enquire, *how* he came to
 be invested with this righteousness ? the answer is ready
 and satisfactory. It was by the application of the divine
 SPIRIT, and the instrumentality of *faith*,—Lest any should
 imagine, that this faith might be substituted, instead of his
 own obedience to the law ; he puts an apparent difference
 between the righteousness which justifies, and the faith by
 which it is received : not the righteousness which *consists*
 in, but is THROUGH *the faith of CHRIST*.—To shew the
 great importance of this distinction ; how earnestly he in-
 sisted upon it, as a preacher ; how much it tended to his

consolation, as a *christian*; he repeats the sentiment, he re-inculcates the doctrine, *the righteousness which is of GOD BY faith.*

Will you now, *Theron*, or shall I, poor unprofitable creatures, presume to rely on any performances or any accomplishments of our own? When that distinguished saint—a perfect prodigy of gifts, of graces, and of zeal—indefatigable in labours, unconquerable by afflictions, and of whose usefulness there is neither measure nor end—when *he* denies himself in every view; depreciates all; disavows all; and makes mention of nothing, but the incomparable righteousness of his *obedient, dying, interceding SAVIOUR.*

What shall I say more? shall I attempt to play the rhetorician, and borrow the insinuating arts of persuasion? This, after, all the *cogent testimonies* produced, and all the *great authorities* urged, would be a needless parade. When our pen is a sun-beam, there is but little occasion to dip it in oil.

Instead of such an attempt, give me leave to make a frank and honest confession. I would conceal nothing from my friend. He should have a sash to my breast; throw it up at his pleasure! and see all that passes within. Though I never had any temptation to that pernicious set of errors, which passes under the character of *socinianism*; yet I had many searchings of heart, and much solicitous enquiry, how far we are indebted to *CHRIST's active righteousness.* Thoroughly persuaded that *other foundation can no man lay, save that which is, laid, even JESUS CHRIST**; and that *there is no other name given under heaven; whereby men can be saved†*! yet, whether we were not to confine our matter of considerable doubt. At first, I was inclined to acquiesce in the affirmative. After long consideration and many prayers my faith fixed upon the whole of *CHRIST's* mediatorial undertaking. Which began in his spontaneous submission to the law! was carried on through all his meritorious life; and issued in his atoning death.—This now the basis of my confidence, and the bulwark of my happiness. Hither I fly; here I rest; as the dove, after her wearisome

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

† Act. iv. 12.

and fruitless roving, returned to *Noah*, and rested in the ark.

This scheme first recommended to my *affections*; as making the most ample provision, for the security and repose of a guilty conscience. Which, when alarmed by the accusations of sin, is very apprehensive of its condition; and will not be comforted, till every scruple is satisfied, and all the obstructions to its peace, are removed. Thus I reasoned, with myself—“ though there is undoubtedly, something “ to be said for the other side of the question; yet, this is “ evidently the safest method. And, in an affair of infinite “ consequence, who would not prefer the surest expedient?—Should the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST be “ *indispensably* requisite, as a wedding-garment; what will “ *they* do, when the great immortal KING appears, who “ have refused to accept it? Whereas, should it not prove “ *so absolutely* necessary; yet such a dependance can never “ obstruct our salvation. It can never be charged upon us, “ as an article of contumacy or perverseness, that we thought “ *too meanly* of our own, *too magnificently* of our LORD’s obedience, so that let the die turn either way, we are exposed to no hazard.—This sheme takes in all, that the “ other systems comprehend, and abundantly more. In this I “ find no defect, no flaw, no shadow of insufficiency. It is “ somewhat like the *perfect cube*; which, where-ever it “ may be thrown, or however it may fall, is sure to settle “ upon its base.—Supposing, therefore, the important “ beam should hang inequilibrium, with respect to argument; “ these circumstances, cast into the scale, may very justly “ be allowed to turn the balance.”

Upon a more attentive examination of the subject, I perceived—that this is the doctrine of our *national* church; has received the attestation of our ablest divines; and has been, in all ages, the consolation of the most eminent saints: That it is the genuine sense of scripture; and not some inferior or subordinate point, incidentally touched upon by the inspired writers, but the *sum* and *substance* of their message; that which constitutes the vitals of their system, and is the very soul of their religion. On which account

the whole gospel is denominated from it, and styled *the ministration of righteousness*.—I was farther convinced, that this way of salvation magnifies, beyond comparison, the divine law ; is no less honorable to all the divine attributes ; and exhibits the ever blessed MEDIATOR in the most illustrious and the most delightful view.

All these considerations, under the influence of the eternal SPIRIT, have determined my *judgment*, and established my *faith*. So that I trust, neither the subtilties of wit, nor the sneers of ridicule, nor any other artifice, shall ever be able to separate me from the grace and righteousness which are in JESUS CHRIST.—By his death, I am discharged from guilt—by his obedience, I am constituted righteous—by his complete satisfaction, I am completely justified, and shall be eternally saved.—In each of these respects, HE is my ALL.

Let me, by way of conclusion, review that awful subject, which introduced the letter. Let me suppose the JUDGE, who *is at the door*, actually come: the great and terrible day which is hasting forward, really commenced.—Hark! the trumpet sounds the universal summons. The living are struck with a death-like astonishment; the dead start from their silent abodes.—See! the whole earth takes fire; the sun is turned into darkness; and the stars fall from the firmament.—Behold! the ANCIENT OF DAYS is revealed from heaven. *His garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels are as burning fire. Thousand thousands minister unto him; and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The judgment is set, and the books are opened.*†

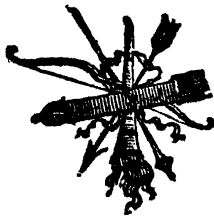
Observe those exemplary *christians*, whose sentiments I have been collecting. *They* renounce themselves, and rely on their glorious SURETY. Methinks, I hear them say, each as they quit their beds of dust; *I will go forth from the grave in thy strength, O blessed JESUS; and at the decisive tribunal, will make mention of thy righteousness on-*

ly.—At the same time, will you, Theron, or shall I—before the innumerable multitude of anxious sinners, and adoring seraphs—stand forth and declare?—"Let those pusillanimous creatures fly for refuge to their SAVIOUR's righteousness. We will confide in works, in accomplishments of our own. We are the men, who have *personally* kept the divine law, and want no *suppositious* obedience from another. Let the eye that glances through immensity, and penetrates the recesses of the heart; let that holy and omniscient eye, examine our temper, and sift our conduct. We are bold to risk our souls, and all their immortal interests, on the issue of such a scrutiny."

Perhaps, your mind is impressed with this *solemn scene*, and your thoughts recoil at such *daring presumption*. If so, it will be proper for me to withdraw, and leave you to your own meditations. At such moments, to obtrude on your company, would render me the troublesome and officious, rather than

Your respectful and affectionate,

ASPASIO.





LETTER VI.

THERON TO ASPASIO,

DEAR ASPASIO,

THE last evening was one of the finest I ever saw. According to custom, I made an excursion into the open fields; and wanted nothing to complete the satisfaction, but my friend's company, I could not but observe, how much your improving conversation heightened the charms of nature. When religion applied philosophy, every thing was *instructive*, as well as *pleasing*.—Not a breeze swept over the plains, to clear the sky, and cool the air; but it tended also to disperse our doubts, and enliven our faith in the supreme, all-sufficient GOOD.—Not a cloud tinged the firmament with radiant colours, or amused the sight with romantic shapes, but we beheld a picture of the present world. Its fading acquisitions, and fantastic joys were portrayed, in the mimic forms, and the transitory scene.—Even the weakest of the insect-tribe, that skim the air in sportive silence, addressed us with the strongest incitements, and gave us the loudest calls, to be *active* in our day, and *useful* in our generation. They cried, at least when you lent them your tongue,

Such is vain life, an idle fight of days,
A still delusive round of sickly joys,
A scene of little cares, and trifling passions,
If not ennobled by the deeds of virtue.

How often at the approach of sober eve, have we sauntered through the dusky glade. Observing the last remains of light, now impurpling the western clouds; now faintly gleaming on the mountain's brow: now creeping insensibly from all shaded landscapes.—How often have we stole along the cloysters of some leafy bower; attentive to the tale of a *querulous* current. That seemed to be struck with horror, at the awful gloom; and complained with heavier murmurs, as it passed under the blackening shades, and along the root-obstructed channel. Or else, far from the babbling brook, and softly treading the grassy path, we listened to the *nightingale's* song. While every gale held its breath, and all the leaves forebore their motion, that they might neither drown nor interrupt the melodious woe.—From both which pensive strains, you endeavoured to temper and chastise the exuberant gaiety of my spirits. You convinced me, that *true* joy is a serious thing: is the child of sedate thought, not the spawn of intemperate mirth; nursed, not by the sallies of dissolute merriment, but by the exercise of serene contemplation.

Sometimes at the gladsome return of morn, we have ascended an airy eminence; and hailed the new-born day; and gazed the dew-bright earth; and followed, with our delighted eye, the mazes of some glittering stream.—Here *rushing*, with impetuous fury, over the mountain's summit; tumbling from rock to rock; and roaring down the craggy steep. Impatient, as it were, to get free from such rugged paths, and mingle itself with the adjacent mead. There, slackening its headlong career, and smoothing its eddies, into a glassy surface and a gentle flow. While deep embosomed in the verdant soil, it *winds* through the cherished and smiling herbage. Sometimes, lost amidst closing willows; sometimes, issuing with fresh lustre from the verdant arch; always, roving with an air of amorous complacency, as though it would kiss the fringed banks, and caress the flowery glebe.—Reminded, by this watery monitor, of that constancy and vigour, with which the affections should move towards the great *center* of happiness, *CHRIST JESUS*—of that determined ardour, with which we should break through the entanglements of temptation,

and obstacles of the world, in order to reach our everlasting *rest*—and of the mighty difference between the turbulent, the frothy, the precipitate gratifications of vice, and the calm, the substantial, the permanent delights of *religion*.

Or else, with careless step, we have rambled along the fields. Sometimes, prying into the secret shade, or hiding ourselves in the sequestered vale. Sometimes, we have roved again on the upland plains; with eager views surveying the universal prospect; and even devouring the beauties of nature, or, as the scripture speaks, *taking them with our eyes**. Never weary of admiring the magnificence and glory of the creation. An endless variety of graceful objects, and delightful scenes! each soliciting our chief regard; every one worthy of our whole attention; all conspiring to touch the heart with a mingled transport of wonder, of gratitude, and of joy.—So that we have returned from our rural expedition, not as the *spendthrift* from the gaming-table, cursing his stars, and raving at his ill luck; gulled of his money, and the derided dupe of sharpers. Not as the *libertine* from the house of wantonness, surfeited with the rank debauch, dogged by shame, goaded by remorse, with a thousand recent poisons tingling in his veins. But we returned, as ships of commerce from the *golden* continent, or the *spicy* islands, with new accessions of sublime improvement, and solid pleasure. With a deeper veneration for the Almighty CREATOR; with a warmer sense of his unspeakable favors; and with a more inflamed desire, “to know him now by faith, and after this life to have the fruition of his glorious GODHEAD.”

Sometimes, with an agreeable relaxation, we have transferred our cares, from the welfare of the nation, to the flourishing of the farm; and, instead of enacting regulations for the civil community, we have planned schemes for the cultivation of our ground, and the prosperity of our cattle.—Instead of attending to the course of fleets, and the destination of armies, we have directed the plough where to tend the grassy turf; or taught the honey-suckle to wind

round the arbour, and the jessamine to climb upon the wall.—Instead of interposing our friendly office, to reconcile, contending kingdoms; we have formed a *treaty of coalition* between the stranger cyon, and the adopting tree? and by the remarkable melioration of the ensuing fruit, demonstrated (would contending empires regard the precedent) what advantages flow from pacific measures, and an amicable union.—Instead of unraveling the labyrinths of state, and tracing the finesses of foreign courts; we have made ourselves acquainted with the *Politics* of nature, and observed, how wonderfully, how mysteriously that great projectress acts.—In this place she rears a vast trunk, and unfolds a multiplicity of branches from one small berry. She qualifies; by her amazing operations, a few contemptible acorns, that were formerly carried in a child's lap, to bear the *British* thunder round the globe, and secure to our Island the sovereignty of the ocean.—In another place, she produces from a dry grain, *first the green blade; then the turgid ear; afterwards the full-grown and repined corn in the ear* *. Repaying, with exact punctuality, and with lavish usury, the husbandman's toil, and the husbandman's loan: causing, by a most surprising resurrection, the death of one seed, to be fruitful in the birth of hundreds.

But I forgot your caution, *Aspasio*; forget, how kindly you have checked me, when I have been haranguing upon, I know not what, powers and work of nature. Where, as it is GOD who *worketh hitherto* †: who to this day exert, that secret but unremitted energy, which is the life of this majestic system, and the cause of all its stupendous operations.—Let this shew you, how much I want my guide, my philosopher, and friend. Without his prompting aid, my genius is dull; my reflections are awkward; and my religious improvements jejune; somewhat like the *bungling* imitations of the tool, compared with the *masterly* effects of vegetation.—However, I will proceed. Yet, not from any view of informing my *Aspasio*, but only to draw a bill upon his pen; and lay him under an obligation to enrich me with

* Mark ix. 28.

† John v. 17.

another letter, upon the grand and excellent subject of his last.

Art is dim-sighted in her plans, and defective even in her most elaborate essays. But nature, or rather nature's sublime AUTHOR, is indeed a designer and a *workman* * that need not be ashamed †. His eye strikes out ten thousand elegant models, and his touch executes all with inimitable perfection—what an admirable specimen is here, of the divine skill, and of the divine goodness! this terraqueous globe is intended, not only for a place of habitation, but for a storehouse of conveniences. If we examine the several apartments of our great abode; if we take a general *inventory* of our common goods; we shall find reason to be charmed with the displays, both of nice œconomy, and of boundless profusion.

Observe the *surface* of this universal message. The ground, coarse as it may seem, and trodden by every foot, is nevertheless the *laboratory*, where the most exquisite operations are performed; the *shop*, if I may so speak, where the finest manufactures are wrought. Though all generations have, each in their order, been accommodated by its productions; though all nations under heaven are, to this very day, supplied by its liberalities, it still continues inexhausted. Is a resource, always new; a magazine, never to be drained.

As this is a Property very remarkable, and unspeakably valuable, it deserves our more particular regard. Was it reversed, what would become of the world, both rational, animal, and vegetable?—In commercial affairs, *usury* is looked upon as the canker of an estate. A corroding worm, which eats into the heart, and consumes the very vitals, of our substance. The earth borrows immense sums yearly. These she repays with an interest prodigiously large, almost incredible. Yet is she never impoverished. Or if impoverished in some degree, the repose of a single year, with a little cultivation from the owner, is sufficient for the reparation of all her losses.—Old age weakens the

C c

most vigorous animals. Even the hardest oaks are impaired by time. A state of barrenness and decay awaits them all; and admits neither of prevention, nor of remedy. But the earth, which is the mother and the nurse of us all, is subject to none of these infirmities. She is now almost six thousand years old, yet discovers no sign of a *broken* constitution, nor any one symptom of *exhausted* strength. In spring, she blooms like a virgin; in summer, she sparkles like a bride; in autumn, she teems like a matron. If grey hairs seem to be upon her, during the wintry months; she is sure to drop them, when the frosts are gone, and the sun approaches. She never fails, at that season, to re-assume all the graces, and to re-exert all the vigour of youth.—Though she has been pregnant with thousands and thousands of vine-tages and harvests; though she has suckled unnumbered millions of green and flowery families; her womb is as strong and lively to conceive, her breasts are as copious and milky to nourish, as if she was but just delivered of her first-born.—To what is this unequaled and never-ceasing fertility owing? what, but that mighty word, proceeding from the mouth of JEHOVAH; *while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease* *. How short the decree, but how long and lasting its efficacy! It has reached to this hour; it will reach to distant ages; it will extend itself to the very end of time.

The *unevenness* of the ground, far from being a blemish or a defect; heightens its beauty, and augments its usefulness.—*Here*, it is scooped into deep and sheltered vales, almost constantly covered with a spontaneous growth of verdure: which, all tender and succulent, composes an easy couch, and yields the most agreeable fodder, for the various tribes of cattle.—*There*, it is extended into a wide, open, champain country: which, annually replenished with the husbandman's seed, shoots into a copious harvest, not only of that *principal wheat*, which strengthens our heart, and is the staff of our life; but of the *appointed barley*† also, and of various other sorts of grain. Which yield an excellent

food for our animals; and either enable them to dispatch our drudgery, or else fatten their flesh for our tables.

The furrows, obedient to the will of man, vary their produce*. They bring forth a crop of tall, flexible, slender plants†: whose thin filmy coat, dried, attenuated, and skillfully manufactured, transforms itself into some of the most necessary accommodations of life, and genteel est embellishments of society.—It is wove into ample volumes of cloth; which, fixes the mast, give wings to our ships, and waft them to thy extremities of the ocean.—It is twisted into vast lengths of cordage; which add nerves to the crane, and lend sinews to the pulley; or else, adhering to the anchor, they fasten the vessel even on the fluctuating element, and secure its station even amidst driving tempests.—It furnishes the Dutchess with her costly head-dress, and delicately fine ruffles. No less strong than neat, it supplies the plowman with his coarse frock, and the sailor with his clumsy trowsers. Its fibres, artfully ranged by the operations of the loom, cover our tables with a graceful elegance, and surround our bodies with a cherishing warmth. On this the painter spreads the colours, which enchant the eye; in this the merchant packs the wares, which enrich the world.

Yonder, the hills, like a grand amphitheatre, arise. Amphitheatre! all the pompous works of Roman magnificence, are less than mole-banks, are mere cockle-shells, compared with those majestic elevations of the earth. Some clad with mantling vines; some crowned with towering cedars; some ragged with mishapen rocks, or yawning with subterraneous dens. Whose rough and inaccessible craggs, whose hideous and gloomy cavities, are not only a continual refuge for the wild goats, but have often proved an asylum to persecuted merit,‡ and a safeguard to the most valuable lives.

* One may venture to say of the earth, with regard to its vegetable operation;

Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum.

† Flax and hemp.

‡ To David, from Saul's malice; to Elijah, from Jezebel's vengeance; to many of the primitive Christian's, from the rage of persecuting emperors; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. Heb. xi. 38.

At a greater distance, the *mountains* lift their frozen brows, or penetrate the clouds with their aspiring peaks. Their frozen brows *arrest* the roving, and *condense* therarefied vapours*. Their stony bowels, formed into caverns, collect the dripping treasures, and send them abroad, in gradual communications, by trickling springs. While their steep sides *precipitate* the watery stores; rolling them on with such a forcible impulse†, that they never intermit their unwearied course, till they have swept through the most extensive climes, and regained their native seas.

The *vineyard* swells into a profusion of clusters: some tinged with the deepest purple, and delicately clouded with azure: some clad with a whitish transparent skin, which shews the tempting kernels, lodged in luscious nectar.—The vine requires a strong reflection of the sun-beams, and a very large proportion of warmth. How commodiously do the hills and mountains minister to this purpose! may we not call those vast declivities, the *garden-walls* of nature? which, far more effectually than the most costly glasses, or most artful green-houses, center the solar heat, and complete the maturity of the grape. Distending it with a liquor of the finest scent, the most agreeable relish, and the most exalted qualities: such as dissipate sadness, and inspire vivacity: such as make glad the heart of man, and most sweetly prompt, both his gratitude and his duty, to the munificent GIVER.—I grieve, and I blush for my fellow-creatures, that any should *abuse* this indulgence of heaven. That any should turn so valuable a gift of GOD into a detestable instrument of sin! should turn the most exhilarating of cordials into poison, madness, and death.

The *kitchen garden* presents us with a new train of benefits. In its blooming ornaments, what unaffected beauty! In its culinary productions, what diversified riches! It ripens a multitude of nutrimental esculents, and almost an equal abundance of medicinal herbs; distributing refresh-

Therefore styled—*Nimbosa cacumina montis*. VIRG.

† It is observable, that the largest rivers in the world, those which roll the heaviest burden of waters, and perform the most extensive circuit through the nations, generally take their rise from mountains.

ments to the healthy, and administering remedies to the sick.—The *orchard*, all fair and ruddy, and bowing down beneath its own delicious burden, gives us a fresh demonstration of our CREATOR's kindness. Regales us, first, with all the delicacies of summer fruits; next, with the more lasting succession of autumnal dainties.

What is nature, but a series of wonders, and a fund of delights! That such a variety of fruits, so beautifully coloured, and so elegantly shaped; so charmingly flavoured, and enriched with such admirable juices; should arise from the earth! Than which nothing is more insipid, sordid, and despicable.—I am struck with pleasing astonishment, at the cause of these fine effects! I am no less surprised, at the manner of bringing them into existence. I take a walk in my garden, or a turn through my orchard, in the month of *December*. There stand several logs of wood. Some of stately height, and diffusive spread. Others, contracted into dwarfs; or disposed along the espalier. All, naked and unornamented; all, fastened to the ground, and neither endued with sense, nor capable of motion.—No human hand will touch them; no human aid will succour them. Yet, in a little time, they are beautified with blossoms; after which, they are covered with leaves; and at last, they are loaded with mellow treasures. With the downy peach and the polished plum; with the musky apricot, and the juicy pear; with the cherry, and its coral pendants, glowing through lattices of green.

—and dark

Beneath her ample leaf, the luscious fig.

I have wondered at the structure of my watch; wondered more at the description of the silk-mills; most of all, at the account of those prodigious engines, invented by *Archimedes*. But what are all the inventions of all the geometicians and mechanics in the world, compared with these inconceivably nice *automata** of nature! These *self-operating*

* Automata or self-operating machines; not meant to set aside the superintendency of providence, but only to exclude the co-operation of man.

machines dispatch their business, with a punctuality that never mistakes, with a dexterity that cannot be equalled. In spring, they clothe themselves with such unstudied but exquisite finery, as far exceeds the embroidery of the needle or the labours of the loom. In autumn, they present us with such a collation of sweetmeats, and such blandishments of taste, as surpass whatever the most critical luxury could compare, or the most lavish fancy imagine. So that those *course* and *senseless* logs, first decorate the divine creation, then perform the honors of the table.

If, amidst these ordinary productions of the earth, GOD appears so *great in counsel, and so mighty in works* : * what may we expect to see, amidst the palace of Heaven ; among the hierarchies of angels ; and in that wonderful REDEEMER, who is, beyond all other objects, beyond all other manifestations, *the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD* †.

The *forest* rears myriads of massy bodies. Which, though neither gay with blossom, nor rich with fruits, supply us with ornaments, far more durable than the former ; with benefits, far more valuable than the latter. They supply us with timber of various kinds, and of very desirable quality †. — But who shall cultivate such huge trees, diffused over so vast a space ? The toil were endless ; the task impossible. See therefore the all-wise and ever-gracious ordination of providence ! They are constituted, that they have no need of the spade, the pruning-knife, or the watering-pot. Nay, the little services of man would diminish, rather than augment their dignity and their usefulness. The more they are neglected, the better they thrive ; scorning, as it were, to be dependent on any hand, but the divine ; and speaking, by their own native grandeur, the transcendent greatness of their PLANTER.

When felled by the axe, they are sawed into beams, and sustain the roofs of our houses. They are fashioned into

Jer. xxxii. 19.

† 1 Cor. i. 24.

* Tully has given us an abridgment of all the preceding particulars. Which, I think, is one of the finest landscapes in miniature, that the descriptive pen ever drew.

carriages, and serve for the conveyance of the heaviest loads.—Their substances so *pliant*, that they yield to the chizze! of the turner, and are smoothed by the plane of the joiner; are wrought into the nicest diminutions of shape, and compose some of the finest branches of household furniture.—Their texture so solid, that they form the most important parts of those mighty engines; which, adapting themselves to the play of mechanic powers, dispatch more work in a single hour, than could otherwise be accomplished in many days.—At the same time, their pressure is so *light* that they float upon the waters; and glide along the surface, almost with as much agility, as the finny fly glances through the deep.—Thus, while they impart magnificence to architecture, and bestow numberless conveniencies on the family; they constitute the very basis of navigation, and give life to domestic trade, give being to the commerce of nations.

Amidst the inaccessible recesses of the forest, an habitation is assigned to those *ravenous* beasts, whose appearance would be frightful, and their neighbourhood dangerous. There, the sternly majestic lion rouses himself from his den; stalks through the midnight shades; and awes the savage herds with his roar. There, the fiery tyger springs upon his prey, and the gloomy bear trains up her whelps. There, the swift leopard ranges, the grim wolf prowls, and both in quest of murder and blood.—Were these horrid animals to dwell in our fields, what *havock* would they make? what *consternation* would they spread? To prevent such mischievous consequences, the Almighty RULER saith; *I have made the wilderness their house, and the barren land their dwelling* *. In obedience to this decree, they banish themselves from the seat of society, and from the scenes of fertility. They even bury themselves, in the deepest solitudes of the desert. While the ox, the horse, and the serviceable quadrupeds, live under our inspection, and keep within our call: profiting us as much by their presence, as the others oblige us by their absence.

If, at any time, those shaggy monsters make an excursion into the habitable world, it is when man retires to his chamber, and sleeps in security. The sun, which invites other creatures abroad, gives them a signal and a command to retreat. *The sun ariseth, and they get them away, and lay them down in their dens* *. Strange! that the orient light, which is so pleasing to us, should strike such terror on them! should, more effectually than a legion of guards, put them all to flight, and clear the country of those formidable enemies!

If we turn our thoughts to the *atmosphere*, we find a most curious and exquisite apparatus of *air*. Which, because no object of our sight, is seldom observed, and little regarded; yet is a source of innumerable advantages. And all these advantages are fetched (which is almost incredible) from the very jaws of ruin. My meaning may be obscure, therefore I explain myself.

We live plunged, if I may so speak, in an ocean of air. Whose *pressure*, upon a person of moderate size, is equal to the weight of *twenty thousand* pounds. Tremendous consideration! should the cieling of a room, or the roof of a house, fall upon us with half that force, would infalliably drive the breath from our lungs, or break every bone in our bodies. Yet, so admirably has the divine wisdom contrived this aerial fluid and so nicely counterposed its dreadful power, that we receive not the slightest hurt; we suffer no manner of inconvenience; we even *enjoy* the load. Instead of being as a mountain on our loins, is like wings to our feet, or like sinews to our limbs,—Is not this *common* ordination of providence, thus considered somewhat like the miracle of the burning bush; whose tender and combustible substance, though in the midst of flames, was neither consumed nor injured †? Is it not almost as marvellous, as the prodigy of the three *Hebrew* youths? Who walked in the fiery furnace, without having a hair of their heads singed or, so much as the smell of fire passing on their garments ‡?—Surely, we have reason to say unto GOD; O! *how terrible*, yet how beneficent, *art thou in thy works*!

* Psal. civ. 22.

† Exod. iii. 2.

‡ Dan. iii. 2.

The air, though too weak to support *our* flight, is a thoroughfare for innumerable wings. Here the whole commonwealth of *birds* take up their abode. Here they lodge and expatiate, beyond the reach of their adversaries. Were they to run upon the earth, they would be exposed to ten thousand dangers, without proper strength to resist them, or sufficient speed to escape them. Whereas, by mounting the skies, and *lifting themselves up on high*, they are secured from peril, *they scorn the horse and his rider**.—Some of them perching upon the boughs, others soaring amidst the firmament, entertain us with their *notes*. Which are musical and agreeable†, when heard at this convenient distance; but would be noisy and importunate, if brought near to our ears.—Here, many of those feathered families reside, which yield us a delicious *treat*; yet give us no trouble, put us to no expence, and, till the moment we want them, are wholly out of our way.

The air, commissioned by its all-bountiful AUTHOR, charges itself with the administration of several offices, which are perfectly obliging, and no less serviceable to mankind.—Co-operating with our lungs, it *ventilates* the blood, and refines our fluids. It qualifies and attempers the vital warmth; promotes and exalts the animal secretions.—Many days we might live, or even whole months, without the light of the sun, or the glimmering of a star. Whereas, if we are deprived, only for a few minutes, of this aerial support, we sicken, we faint, we die.—The same *universal nurse* has a considerable share, in cherishing the several tribes of plants. It helps to transfuse vegetable vigour into the trunk of the oak, and a blooming gaiety into the spread of the rose.

The air undertakes to convey to our nostrils the extremely subtle *effluvia*, which transpire from odoriferous bodies, those detached particles are so imperceptibly small, that they would clude the most careful hand, or escape the

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* Job. xxxix. 18.

† Musical and agreeable—Of this kind are almost all their notes; formed to charm the ear, and inspire delight.

nicest eye. But this trusty depositary *receives* and *escorts* the invisible vagrants, without losing so much as a single atom, entertaining us by this means, with the delightful sensations, which arise from the fragrance of flowers; and admonishing us, by the transmission of offensive smells, to withdraw from an unwholesome situation, or beware of any pernicious food.

The air, by its undulating motion, conduct to our ear all the diversities of *sound*, and thereby, discharges the duty of a most seasonable and faithful monitor. As I walk across the streets of *London*, with my eye engaged on other objects; a dray, perhaps with all its load, is driving down directly upon me. Or, as I ride along the road, musing and unapprehensive, a chariot and six is whirling, on, with a rapid career, at the heels of my horse. The air, like a *vigilant* friend, in pain for my welfare immediately takes the alarm; and, while the danger is at a considerable distance dispatches a *courier* to advertise me of the approaching mischief. ~~It even~~ thunders in my ear; and, with a *clamorous* but *kind* importunity urges me to be upon my guard and provide for my safety.

The air waits, to our sense all the modulations of *music*, and the more agreeable entertainments of refined conversation. When *Myrtilla* strikes the silver strings, and teaches the willing harpsichord to warble with her CREATOR's praise: when her sacred sonata warms the heart with devotion, and wings our desires to Heaven. When *Cleora* tunes her song, or the nightingale imitates her enchanting voice: when she heightens every melodious note, with her adored REDEEMER's name; and so smooths her charming tones, so breathes her rapturous soul, "that GOD's own ear listens delighted."—When wisdom takes its seat on *Mitio's* tongue; and flows, in perspicuous periods, and instructive truths, amidst the chosen circle of his acquaintance. When benevolence, associated with persuasion, dwell on *Nicander's* lips; and plead the cause of injured innocence, or oppressed virtue.—When goodness, leagued with happiness, accompany *Eusebius* into the pulpit; and reclaim the libertine from the slavery of his vices; disengage the infidel from the fascination of his prejudices; and so effectually, so pa-

thetically invite the whole audience, to partake the unequalled joys of pure religion.—In all these cases, the air distributes every musical variation with the utmost *exactness*; and delivers the speaker's messages with the most punctual *fidelity*. Whereas, without this internuntio, all would be sullen and unmeaning silence. We should lose both the pleasure and the profit; neither be charmed with the harmonious, nor improved by the articulate accents.

The air, when vague and unconfined, is so very gentle; that it sports with the most inoffensive wantonness, amidst *Ophelia's* locks, and scarce disadjusts a single curl. But, when collected and applied by the contrivance of man, it acts with such *prodigious force*; as is sufficient to whirl round the hugest wheels, though clogged with the most incumbering loads. It makes the ponderous mill stones move as swiftly, as the dancer's heel: and the massy beams play as nimbly, as the musician's finger.

If we climb, in speculation, the higher regions, we find an endless succession of clouds, fed by evaporations from the ocean.—The clouds are themselves a kind of ocean, suspended in the air with amazing skill. They travel, in detached parties, and in the quality of *itinerant cisterns*, round all the terrestrial globe. They fructify, by proper communications of moisture, the spacious pastures of the wealthy; and gladden, with no less liberal powers, the cottager's little spot. Nay, so condescending is the benignity of their great PROPRIETOR, that they *satisfy the desolate, and waste ground: and cause, in the most uncultivated wilds, the bud of the tender herb to spring forth* *.

That the natives of the lonely desert, those savage, savage herds which know no master's stall, may nevertheless experience the care, and rejoice in the bounty, of an all-supporting PARENT.

How wonderful; that the water, which is much *denser* and far *heavier* than the air, should rise into it; make its way through it; and take a station in the very uppermost regions of it! This, one would imagine, were almost as im-

possible, as for the rivers to run back to their source. Yet providence has contrived a way, to render it not only practicable, but matter of continual occurrence.

How wonderful ; that *pendant lakes* should be diffused, or *liquid mountains* heaped over our heads ; and both sustained in the thinnest darts of the atmosphere ! We little think of that surprising expedient, which, without conduits of stone, or vessels of brass, keeps such loads of water in a buoyant state. *Job* and *Elihu* considered this, and were struck with holy admiration. *Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds ?* How such ponderous bodies are made to hang with an even poise, and hover like the lightest down ? These are the wondrous works of *HIM*, who is perfect in knowledge*. *He bindeth up the waters in his thick Clouds ; and the Cloud* though nothing is more loose and fluctuating, becomes, by his Almighty order, strong and tenacious as casks of iron ; it is not rent † under all the weight.

When the sluices are opened, and the waters descend, we might reasonably suspect ; that they would rush down in cataracts, more rapid and impetuous, than the mountain torrent. Thus would they be dreadfully pernicious. They would destroy every thing, where they happened to fall ; and leave other parts of the ground, destitute of necessary moisture.—Whereas, now, instead of such a disorderly and precipitate effusion, they coalesce into *globules*, and are dispensed in gentle *showers*. They are often attenuated into the smallness of a hair ‡ ; they spread themselves, as if they were strained through the orifices of the finest wateringpot ; and form those *small drops of rain, which the clouds distil upon man abundantly* §. Thus, instead of drowning the earth, and sweeping away its fruits, they cherish universal nature ; and, in conformity to the practice of their great MASTER, distribute their humid stores to men, to animals and vegetables, as they are able to bear them §.

* Job xxxvii. 16. † Job xxvi. 8.

‡ Deut. xxxii. 2. § Job xxxvi. 28.

§ Mark iv. 33.

Besides the reservoirs of water, here are cantoned various parties of *winds*, mild or fierce, gentile or boisterous. Furnished with breezy wings, to fan the glowing firmament, and diffuse refreshment on a fainting world: or else, fitted to act as an universal *besom*; and, by sweeping the chambers of the atmosphere, to preserve the fine aerial fluid free from feculencies. Without this wholesome agency of the winds, the air would stagnate; would soon become putrid; and surrounded us, in the literal sense of the words, with *darkness that might be felt* *. *London, Paris*, and all the great cities in the world, instead of being the seats of elegance, would degenerate into sinks of corruption.

Let the inhabitants of *Jamaica* or *Japan*, let the natives of *Guinea* or *Peru*, express the value of this elementary gift. How could they subsist, in those torrid regions without this best of visitants, the cool diurnal breeze? alas! how would their blood boil; how would their spirits fail; and their *strength be dried up like a potsherd*! without this salutary breeze, the air would be liquid fire; their houses the residence of fevers; and their clime, as it were, the ante-chamber to hell.—But the fresh and sprightly gales constantly rise with the rising sun; and ply the fan, without intermission, around both men and beasts. This qualifies and tempers the otherwise intolerable heat; this sheds comfort, and supports health; this is, amidst their burning abodes, the very balm of life.—Not all the aromatic odours, nor all the ambrosial sweets of those fruitful islands, are half so agreeable to the taste or the smell, as these gales are recreating and grateful to the lungs. And what—Ah! what were all the ivory and the gold of those wealthy continents? how dim their lustre! how insignificant their traffic! if separated from this incomparably better commerce with the ever-undulating sky!—Yet there is one species of commerce, one kind of sacred intercourse, preferable, infinitely preferable even to those sweet, sovereign, elementary refreshments. The church seems to pant and gasp after it,

* *Exod.* x. 21.

as a thirsty land. Her wants I feel, and her wishes I adopt. *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south-wind; come; thou all-reviving, all-enlivening SPIRIT, and blow upon my garden, or rather upon the poor, parched, barren desert of my soul; that the spices, or some savour of righteousness, and true holiness, may flow out.*

At sea, the winds swell the mariner's sails, and speed his course along the watery way: speed it far more effectually, than a thousand rowers, bending to their strokes, and tugging at the oar.—By land, they perform the office of an immense seed-man, and scatter abroad the reproductive principles of a multitude of plants; which, though the staff of life to many animals, are too small for the management, or too mean for the attention of man. *GOD bringeth the winds out of his treasures**, is a very just and edifying observation. Whether we consider it, as a description of his absolute and uncontrollable dominion over this potent meteor; *he bringeth; he maketh it to come*; like some tame sequacious animal, which hearkens to a word, or obeys the nod. Or whether we contemplate the welcome and kindly influence of the meteor itself, on all the face of nature; *he bringeth it*, not from the armoury, where the weapons of vengeance are deposited; but from *his treasures*, whence proceed the convenient, the beneficial, and the desirable.

Here are *lightnings* stationed. Though dormant at present, they are in act to spring, and launch the livid flame: whenever their piercing flash is necessary. Necessary to destroy the sulphureous and pestilential vapours; or to dislodge those floating dregs, which might corrupt the purity of the æther, and obscure its more than crystalline transparency.—This fiercest of fires (see the stupendous operations of **JEHOVAH!**) is engendered by the coldest of elements. That blazing bolt, which cleaves the forest oaks with a stroke; that penetrating flame, which melts the bars of steel with a touch; are the offspring of water, and issue from the womb of a cloud. *HE maketh lightnings**, saith

the inspired philosopher, not as an efflux from the sun; but (amazing association!) as an appendage or concomitant *for the rain*.

In the magnificent arch of the sky, is situate a *radiant* orb, which enlightens the tracts, cheers the inhabitants, and colours all the productions, of this habitable globe. The air, by a singular address in managing the rays, amplifies their usefulness: its *reflecting* power * augments that heat, which is the life of nature; its *refracting* power prolongs that splendour, which is the beauty of the creation.—These emanations of light, though formed of inactive matter, yet (astonishing apparatus of eternal wisdom!) are refined almost to the *subtlety* of spirit, and are scarce inferior even to thought in *speed*. By which means, they spread themselves, with a kind of instantaneous swiftness, through the circumference of a whole hemisphere; and though they fill, wherever they pervade, yet they straighten no place, embarrass no one, incumber nothing.

These give the diamond its brilliancy, and the velvet its gloss: to these the chearful eye is obliged for its lively sparkle, and the modest cheek for its rosy blush. These, attending the judicious touches of the pencil, bid the drape-ry flow, and the embodied figure rise; bid the countenance wear the calm serenity of thought; or be agitated with the wild transports of passion.—Without this circumstance of *colour*, we should want all the entertainments of vision, and be at a loss to distinguish one thing from another. We should hesitate to pronounce, and must take a little journey to determine, whether yonder inclosure contains a piece of pasturage, or a plot of arable land. We should question, and could not very expeditiously resolve, whether the next person we meet, be a soldier in his regimentals, or a swain in his holiday-suit? a bride in her ornaments, or a widow in her weeds. But colour, like a particular livery, characterizes the class, to which every individual belongs. It is the *label*, which indicates, upon the first inspection, its

* The air is a curious cover, which, without oppressing the inhabitants of the earth with any perceivable weight, condenses, reflects, and thereby increases the vivifying heat of the sun.

respective quality. It is the *ticket*, which guides our choice, and directs our hand *.

The sun, I said, was *situate*. But is rather itinerant, than resident. It passes through the firmament ; and having supplied us with light for several hours, carries day into the other hemisphere. What then shall we do, when the fountain of light is sealed, or its communications are withheld ? —A supply is provided. The stars appear, like thousands of flaming torches. Chiefly the moon, at certain seasons succeeds to the office of furnishing us with the welcome blessing.—But the moon is a dark body. How then can it impart, what it does not possess ? Providence, infinitely rich in contrivances, has found out a method. Than which nothing can be more simple, yet nothing more effectual. The moon, being at a proper distance, receives and reflects the rays of the sun. Which are so strong in themselves, that they reach, even in their reverberated direction, as far as our globe. Yet are rendered, by this reflection, soft and gentle. Insomuch, that they afford us a most commodious and chearing illumination ; such as qualifies the horrors of darkness without any dimunition of its composing nature, and sodoriferous influence.—Thus the sun lightens us, by the intervention of the moon, when he is departed many degrees beyond our sight.

We have cursorily surveyed the *upper rooms* of our great habitation, and taken a turn along the *ground-floor* ; if we descend into the subterraneous lodgments, the *cellars* of the stately structure, we shall there also find the most exquisite contrivance, acting in concert with the most profuse goodness. Here are various *minerals*, of sovereign efficacy in medicine. Which rectify the vitiated blood, and quicken the languid spirits ; which often kindle the fading bloom in the virgin's complexion, and reinvigorate the enfeeble arm of manhood. Here are beds fraught with metals of the richest value.—From hence come the golden treasures, from hence the silver stores, which are the very life of

* This I believe suggests the true sense of those noble similitudes, used by the divine speaker. It is turned as clay to the seal, and they stand as a garment : The earth and all its productions receive, from the rising sun, both colour and beauty.

traffic; and circulate through the body politic, as the vital fluid through animal frame. Which in the refining hand of charity, are feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind, and make the widow's ear sing for joy.

Here are mines, which yield a metal of meaner aspect, but of a firmer cohesion, and of superior usefulness. A metal, that constitutes almost all the implements, with which art and industry execute their various designs. Without the assistance of *iron*, business would be reduced to the lowest ebb; commerce would feel her wings clipped; and every species of mechanic skill, either utterly fail, or be miserably baffled. Without the assistance of iron, it would be almost impossible to rear the steady mast, to display the daring canvas, or drop the faithful anchor. Destitute of this ever-needed commodity, we should have no plow to furrow the soil, no shuttle to traverse the loom, scarce any ornament for polite, or any utensil for ordinary life.

Here is an inexhausted fund of combustible materials †, which supply the whole nation with fuel. These present their ministrations in the kitchen; and yielding themselves as aliment to the flame, render our food both palatable and healthy.—These offer their service at the forge; and, with their piercing heat, mollify the most stubborn bars, till they become pliant to the stroke of the hammer—The *coals* pour themselves likewise into the glass-houses. They rage, amidst those astonishing furnaces, with irresistible but useful fierceness. They liquify even the obdurate flint, and make the most rigid substances far more ductile, than the softest clay, or the melting wax: make them obsequious not only to the lightest touch, but to the impressions of our very breath.

By this means, we are furnished, and from the coarsest ingredients, with one of the most curious and valuable manufactures in the world. A manufacture, which transmits the light and warmth of the sun into our houses; yet ex-

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† As for the earth, says Job, out of it cometh bread. Corn, vegetables, and whatever is good for food, springs from its surface.

cludes the annoyance of the rains, and the violence of the winds. Which gives *new eyes* to decrepit age, and vastly *more enlarged* views to philosophy and science. Which leads up the astronomer's discernment, even to the *satellites* of *saturn*; and carries down the naturalist's observation, as far as the animalcule race: bringing near what is immensely remote, and making visible what, to our unassisted sight, would be absolutely imperceptible.

We have also, when both sun and moon withdraw their shining, an expedient to supply their place. We can create an *artificial* day in our rooms, and prolong our studies, or pursue our business, under its cheering influence. With beaming tapers and ruddy fires, we *chase* the darkness, and *mitigate* * the cold; we cherish conversation, and cultivate the social spirit. We render those very intervals of time, some of the most delightful portions of our life, which otherwise would be a joyless and unimproving void.

These obscure caverns are the birth-place of the most sparkling gems; of *onyx-stones*; of *glistering stones*, and *all manner of precious stones*. Which, when nicely polished, advantageously set, and prodigal of their lustre, stand candidates for a place on the royal crown, or a seat on the *virtuous* fair one's breast. I will not, with our men of gallantry say, they emulate the living brilliancy of her eyes; rather they serve as a foil, to set off the beauties of her accomplished mind, and amiable conversation. *Whose price*, according to the unerring estimate of inspiration, is superior to sapphires, *is far above rubies* †.—If these shining rarities, extracted from the cabinets of the earth, are an ornament to some, are they not an incitement to all? All who have read those animating and glorious words; *they shall be mine saith the LORD, in the day when I make up my jewels* ‡

Here are *quarries*, stocked with stones, inferior in beauty to the jeweler's ware, but much more eminently be-

* I can hardly forbear transcribing the grateful and pious remark, which Socrates makes on this occasion, demonstrating, from the advantageous and benign constitution of things, GOD's indulgent care for mankind.

† Prov. xxxi. 36.

‡ Mal. iii. 17.

neficial. Which, when properly ranged, and commented with a tenacious mortar, form the convenient abodes of peace and build the strongest fortifications of war: descending us from the inclemencies of the weather, and the more formidable assaults of our enemies. These constitute the arches of the bridge, which convey the traveler, with perfect security, over the deep and rapid stream; enabling both man and horse to pass, with easy intercourse, from one bank of the broadest river to another. These give us the rocky girdles of our quays, and strengthen the arms, the stupendous arms of the mole: which stretch themselves far into the ocean; curb the impetuosity of the surge; and skreen the helpless bark, while tempestuous waves, like a savage disappointed of its prey, foam, and roar, and rage around.

These stony treasures are comparatively soft, while they continue in bowels of the earth; but acquire an increasing hardness, exposed to the open air. Was this remarkable peculiarity reversed what difficulties would attend the labours of the mason? His materials could not be extracted from their beds nor fashioned for his purpose, without infinite toil. Suppose his work completed, it could not long withstand the fury of the elements; but insensibly mouldering, or incessantly denying, would elude the expectations of the owner; perhaps, might prove an immature grave, instead of a durable dwelling.

Here are vast layers of clay. Which however contemptible in its appearance, is abundantly more advantageous than the rocks of diamond, or the veins of gold. This is moulded, with great expedition and ease, into vessels of any shape, and of almost every size. Some, so delicately *fine*, that they compose the elegant and ornamental furniture, for the tea-table of a princess. Others, so remarkably *cheap*, that they are ranged on the shelves, and minister at the meals, of the peasant. All so perfectly *neat*, that no liquid takes the least taint, nor the nicest palate any disgust, from their cleanly services. The CREATOR, who never forgets and never neglects even the meanest of the people, has distributed this most necessary kind of earth in the greatest abundance. It is found in every country, almost in every field. It lies near the surface, and is obtained with little labour,

and with very little expence. Thus hath thou, O GOD, of thy goodness, prepared for the poor.

A multiplicity of other stores, are locked up by providence, in these ample vaults. The key of all is committed to the management of *industry*; with free permission to produce each particular species, as necessity shall demand, or prudence direct.

Which shall we more admire, the bountiful heart, the liberal hand, or the all-discerning eye of our great CREATOR? How observable, how admirable is the *precaution*, in removing these useful but cumbrous wares, from the superficies; and stowing them, in proper repositories or lumber-rooms, beneath our feet!—Were they scattered over the surface, the ground would be choaked and *embarrassed* with the enormous heaps. Our roads would be blocked up, and scarce any portion left free for the operations of husbandry.—Were they buried extremely deep, or, sunk to the centre of the globe, it will cost us immense pains to procure them; or to rather, they would be quite *inaccessible*.—Were they uniformly spread into a pavement for nature; the trees could not strike their roots, nor the herbs shoot their blades but universal *sterility* must ensue.—Whereas, by their present disposition they furnish with a magazine of metallic, without causing any diminution of our vegetable treasures. Fossils of every splendid and serviceable kind enrich the *bowels*, while bloom and verdure embellish the *face* of the earth.

So judicious is the arrangement of this grand edifice! So beneficent the destination of its whole furniture*! In which all is regulated with consummate skill, and touched into the highest perfection. All most exactly adapted to the various intention of providence, and the manifold exigencies of mankind. Supplying *every want*, we can feel; and gratifying *every wish*, we can form.

Inasmuch, that the whole system affords a favourite topic of praise, even to those distinguished beings, who *stand on the sea of glass, and have the harps of GOD in their*

* No notice is taken of the ocean, in this little gentroll of nature's wealth; because a distinct sketch is given of that grand receptacle and its principal services, in letter 1, 22

hands. They lift their voice and sing, *great and marvelous are thy works, O LORD GOD almighty**!—And is there not reason, my *Aspasio* would say, infinite reason, for us to join this triumphant choir? adding gratitude to our wonder, and love to our hallelujahs? since all these things are to us, not merely objects of contemplation, but sources of accommodation: not only a majestic spectacle, bright with the display of our CREATOR's wisdom, but an inestimable gift, rich with the emanations of his goodness. The earth hath he *set before* the inhabitants of glory, but *the earth hath he given to the the children of men*†—Having given us ourselves; given us a world; has he not a right, a most unquestionable right, to make that tender demand? *my son, give me thy heaven*‡.

Shall I add another passage? which, viewed with any but the last paragraph, will be like *the head of gold*, eminent and conspicuous on *feet of iron and clay*. It is taken from the finest philosophical oration, that ever was made. I never read it, but with a glow of delight, and with impressions of awe. It is, in short, inimitably spirited and sublime.—You think, perhaps, I act an impolitic part, in being so lavish of my praise; and that the quotation must suffer, by such an *aggrandizing* introduction. But I am under no apprehensions of this kind. Forbear to be delighted, if you can; cease to admire, if you can; when you hear OMNISCIENCE itself declaring, that, on sight of this universal fabric, emerging out of nothing, THE MORNING STARS SANK TOGETHER, AND ALL THE SONS OF GOD SHOUTED FOR JOY.§—The system was so graceful, so magnificent, and, in all respects, so exquisitely, finished; that the most accomplished intelligences were charmed, were transported. They knew not how to express themselves on the great occasion, but in *shouts* of exultation, and *songs* of praise. Is it possible for imagination to conceive an *encomium*, so just, so high, so beautifully noble!—I am sure,

* Rev. xv. 3.

† Psal. cxv. 16.]

‡ Prov. xxxiii. 26.

§ Job. xxviii. 7

after so much delicacy, and majesty of sentiment, any thing of mine must be intolerably flat; unless you will except this one profession, that I am, with the most cordial sincerity,

My Dear Aspasio,

Inviolably Yours,

THERON.





LETTER VII.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,

IF you write, with such a view, and from such a motive, as are mentioned in your last, expect no more *free will* offerings from my pen. In this instance, I shall think it my duty to be covetous. I shall act the miser out of principle; and hardly persuade myself to part with a single line, till it is become an undeniable debt. I must turn your own artifice on yourself; and lay you under a necessity of obliging, entertaining, and edifying by your correspondence.

For, give me leave to assure you, that I am always delighted, and always improved by your epistles. They shew me a multitude of beauties in the creation, which I would not otherwise have discerned. They point out the infinite power, the unsearchable wisdom, and the charmingly rich goodness of the glorious MAKER. Such a philosophy, turns all nature into a school of instruction and is no contemptible hand-maid to true religion. It makes every object a step, better than a golden step, to raise both our knowledge and our affection to the adorable and immortal CAUSE of all. Engaged in such speculations, we cry out with the psalmist; O LORD our governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth*.

There is but one circumstance wanting, to complete the pleasure, which I receive from your observations. The sun, you took notice, is the grand ornament of the magnificent system. That which gives colour and form, the comely aspect and graceful distinction, to all material objects.—This the bodily eye perceives and acknowledges. But to the intellectual and believing eye, the sun of righteousness is a much grander, and no less necessary ornament. This adorns the universe, and communicates a glory to every object ; as it manifests, in the clearest brightest manner, all the perfections of the GODHEAD. But, to this lower world, it gives a very peculiar lustre.—A poor peasant reckons it the highest honor to his cottage, that it has once lodged a prince, or accommodated a monarch. With infinitely greater reason may these elementary abodes glory, that they have accommodated, not for a single night, but for many years *the LORD of Heaven*. That the KING of Kings, was their tenant even from his birth in the stable, to his death on the cross.

Yes, *Theron* ; it is the greatest glory of this air, that it furnished IMMANUEL with breath. Yonder sun may boast that it shone upon his foot-steps. That ground ; cumbrous as it is, might even leap for joy, that it bore so divine a guest. And all the elements may clap their hands, that they have the privilege of administering to his nourishment.—As to us men, it is our most honorable distinction, and should be our continual triumph, that HE lived and died *amongst us* ; yea lived and died *for us*. That having united our nature to himself, he has carried it into the Heaven of Heavens. Where it shines, with transcendent majesty and beauty, as the eternal ornament of creation of GOD.—Methinks, therefore this noble and delightful consideration, should intermingle *itself* with all our contemplations, on the works of nature. Just as the beams of the sun intermingle their light, with all the regions of the firmament ; and diffuse their heat over all the face of the earth.

While I am roving heedlessly along, your remarks often interpose, like some intelligent faithful monitor, who claps his hand upon my breast, and says ; *stand still, and consider*

the wondrous works of GOD *.—Willingly I obey the admonition. The *christian* may, with peculiar complacency, consider this grand theatre of wonders, this copious magazine of blessings. Because conscious of an interest in JESUS, he has a right to call them all *his own* †. He may look round upon present things; he may look forward unto future things; and, trusting in his SAVIOUR's merit, may confidently say—"not one only, but both these worlds are mine. By virtue of my REDEEMER's righteousness, I have a covenant-right to the necessary accommodations of this life; and on the same unshaken footing, I stand intitled to the inconceivable felicity of a better".

Surely then it must be as pleasing an employ, to examine the *validity* of our *title* to future things, as to estimate the *value* of our present possessions. *You* have executed the one. Let *me* attempt the other.—An attempt, never unseasonable, now particularly proper. Since it is expressly required by your pen, and suggested by the very subject of your epistle. Especially, as I look upon the *justifying righteousness*, to be no less the peculiar workmanship and gift of GOD, than the scenes of creation and the productions of nature. And as I would fain have every thing that is beautiful, every thing that is magnificent in this visible system, serve as a foil to our REDEEMER's glory; to the glory of his person, and the importance of that service, which he has performed for sinners.

You have surveyed material nature.—It appears to be a fair and stately mansion. For the purposes, which it is intended to answer, completely furnished, and completely finished. Is not our SAVIOUR's *obedience*, the provision made for indigent and guilty souls, equally rich and equally perfect?—Since this is everlasting and immutable; since the other is transient and perishable; doubtless we may argue

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* Job xxxvii. 24

† 1 Cor. iii. 2. All things are yours; because ye are *CHRIST*.

with the judicious Apostle: *If that which is to be done away, which will soon be consigned over to dissolution, is glorious; much more that which remaineth, whose blessed effects continue to eternal ages, is glorious**.

We are, every one, *as an unclean thing*†. Our very nature is contaminated. Even sanctification, though it destroys the reigning, does not wholly supersede the polluting power of iniquity. So that whatever graces we exercise, whatever duties we perform (like rays of light transmitted through coloured glass, or like generous wine streaming from a defiled cask) they receive some improper tinge, or contract some debasing taint. But *CHRIST* was entirely free from this innate contagion. He had no corrupt bias upon his will, nor any irregular tendency in his affections.

Being thus free from original corruption, *he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*‡. Not one vain imagination passed through his mind, nor breathed the slightest stain upon his thoughts. All his words were irreproachable, and every action blameless.—The most accomplished among the children of men, when surprised in some unguarded moment, or assaulted on some weak side, have been betrayed into error, or hurried into sin. Even *Moses* spake unadvisedly with his lips; and *Aaron*, the saint of the LORD, warped to idolatrous practices. *They were* like some stagnating *Lake*; in which, the dregs being subsided, the waters appear clean; but when stirred by temptation, or agitated by affliction, the sediment rises, and the pool is discoloured. Whereas, *CHRIST* may be compared to a *fountain*, that is all transparency, and pure to the very bottom: which, however shaken, however disturbed, is nothing but fluid crystal; permanently and unalterably clear.

It was a small thing for the blessed *JESUS*, to be influenced by no depraved propensity. He was born in a state of *consummate rectitude*; and from the first moment of his existing in flesh, was adorned with all the beauties of holi-

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

† 1 Pet. i. 14, 15.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 22.

ness. HOLINESS TO THE LORD was inscribed, not on the *mitre*, but on the *heart*, and interwoven with the very nature of our great HIGH-PRIEST. Therefore he is styled by the angelic harbinger of his birth, THAT HOLY THING.*—In the prophecy of *Zechariah*, the dignity of our REDEEMER's person, and the perfection of his obedience, are displayed by the similitude of a *stone*†, decorated with the most exquisite engraving. Wrought, not by *Bazaleel* or *Aholiab*, though divinely inspired artists, but by the finger of JEHOVAH himself; and more highly finished, than it is possible for human skill to equal, or human thought to conceive.

The whole tenour of our LORD's conduct, was a living exemplification of piety and morality, in their most *extensive* branches, and most *amiable* forms. Saints of the highest attainments have fallen short of the glory of GOD; have been far from reaching the exalted standard of his precepts. But CHRIST failed into no point; CHRIST came short in no degree.—We formerly observed the great sublimity, and vast extent of the divine law. That, before the tribunal of GOD, nothing will pass for righteousness, but a complete conformity to this most perfect rule. From whence appears the utter impossibility of our justification, on account of any duties performed by ourselves. How should we rejoice then to contemplate our vicarious righteousness! that which is introduced by our condescending SURETY!

JESUS CHRIST, the surety for us insolvent wretches, made himself subject to this law. And though, in its threatenings, the condemning power of sin is set in terrible array; though, in its commands, the very perfection of obedience is most peremptorily insisted on; he asked no mitigation of its severity, nor any abatement of its demands. “Lo I come, said he, to pay the uttermost farthing of the debt, to do every jot and tittle of the duty.” That so his righteousness, arising to view, from the severest trial, by

* Luke i. 35.

† Zech. iii. 9, 10.

the exactest rule, might, like gold from the furnace, shine with all possible lustre.

His righteousness flowed from those best of principles, supreme love to GOD, and unfeigned affection to men. Beginning at these two sources, let us trace our LORD's obedience, through some little part of its illustrious progress.—If, as we proceed, we are enabled to *see that just one*, perhaps, we shall no longer be offended or surprised, at the first and great command of the gospel. *This is his commandment*, which has the precedence to all others, *that we should believe on the name of his son JESUS CHRIST**. Not, that we should *do* any thing to obtain life, but that we should *believe* on his beloved SON; and live by what HE, the blessed substitute for sinners, has done.

His delight in GOD was conspicuous, even from his early years. The sacred solemnities of the sanctuary, were more engaging to his youthful mind, than all the entertainments of a festival.—When he entered upon his ministry, *whole nights* were not too long for his copious devotions. The lonely retirements of the desert, as affording opportunity for undisturbed communion with GOD, were more desirable to CHRIST, than the applauses of an admiring world.

So ceaseless and transcendent was his love to GOD, that he never sought any separate pleasure of his own; but always did those things, which were pleasing in his FATHER's sight, *Wist ye not, that I must be about my FATHER's business?* was the rule of his childhood, and the leading maxim of his whole life. In doing this, he took unspeakable satisfaction; in doing this, he was absolutely indefatigable. *It was his meat and drink*, refreshing as the richest food, delightful as royal dainties, *to finish the work that was given him to do†*.

How wakeful and jealous was his concern for the divine honor! I hear the vilest reproaches cast upon his own character; I see the most horrid indignities offered to his own person. Yet no resentful emotion reddens in his cheek;

* 1. *John* iii. 23.

† *John* iv. 34.

not one angry syllable starts from his mouth. But when mercenary wretches profane the temple, and turn the house of prayer into a den of thieves; then his generous bosom throbs with zeal; then he makes his tongue like a sharp sword; and having first severely rebuked, afterwards resolutely expels, the sacrilegious intruders.—Indeed, his zeal for the house of the LORD and for the purity of his ordinances, is represented by the evangelical historian, as eating him up*. Like a heavenly name, glowing in his breast, it sometimes fired him with a graceful imagination; sometimes melted him into godly sorrow; always broke forth and exerted itself in a variety of vigorous efforts; till it even consumed his vital spirits.

So active and unremitted was the obedience of the blessed JESUS, that the sun did not enter upon his morning race with a more constant assiduity, nor dispatch his daily circuit with greater expedition. And sure I am, that radiant luminary never dispensed beams, half so bright, or a thousandth part so beneficial.—Short was his span, but how grand and extensive were his services. So grand, that they bring more glory to GOD, than all the administrations of providence, and all the phænomena of nature. So extensive that they spread, in their gracious efficacy, to the ends of the earth, and to the closing period of time. Nay, they will diffuse their blessed influence even to the celestial world, and have no other limits of their duration than the ages of eternity.

Who can declare the charity of JESUS CHRIST? It was ardent: it was unintermitted: it was unbounded. Though always serene and serious, he was never sullenly grave. His conversation was affability itself, and the law of kindness dwelt on his lips. What fretted and chagined the disciples, made not the least ruffling impression on their LORD. The rude and troublesome behaviour of some, the weak and impertinent talk of others, served only to display the unalterable mildness of his temper.

Nothing could embitter his spirit. Even the wicked and unthankful were partakers, ample partakers of his benevolence. Who ever applied to him in vain? When did he dismiss any needy petitioner, without the desired blessing? What heavy burden did he not unloose? What afflictive evil did he not remove? He even *took their infirmities, and bare their sicknesses* *. In all their afflictions he was afflicted. His tender sympathizing heart felt, as it were, the miseries of others; and was as ready to succour them, as if the complaints and sorrows had been his own.

He not only relieved, when his aid was implored, but prevented the expectations of the distressed. *He went about doing good* †; seeking the afflicted, and offering his assistance. With great fatigue ‡, he traveled to remote cities; with no less condescension, he visited the meanest villages. That all might have the honor, and all the benefit, of his healing presence and heavenly instructions.

He gave sight, and all the agreeable scenes of nature, to the blind; health, and all the choice comforts of life, to the deceased. He expelled malevolent reigning dæmons; and restored, what is more precious than the light of the body, or the vigour of constitution, the calm possession of the intellectual faculties.—What greatly surpassed all the preceding blessings, he delivered the wretched soul from the dominion of darkness, and from the tyranny of sin. He made his followers partake of a divine nature, and prepared them for a state of never-ending bliss.

Such priceless treasures of wisdom and beneficence flowed from his tongue, and were poured from his hands!—How different these triumphs of mercy, from the trophies erected, by wild ambition, in the bloody field! If *Heathens* celebrated those mighty butchers, who made cities their slaughter-house; made half the globe their shambles; and measured their merit, by the devastations they spread; how should *Christians* admire this heavenly **BENEFACTOR**,

* Matt. viii. 17.

† Acts x. 38.

‡ John iv. 6.

who rose upon a wretched world, with healing under his wings ! Who distributed, far and near, the unspeakably rich gifts of knowledge and holiness, of temporal happiness and eternal joy.

Nor were these righteous acts his strange work, but his *repeated*, his *hourly* his almost *incessant* employ. Sometimes, we hear him preaching in the temple, or publishing his glad tidings in the synagogues. Sometimes, we see him surrounded with listening crouds, in a private house ; or bringing forth the good things of his gospel on the deck of a ship. At other times, he takes a mountain for his pulpit ; the heavens are his sounding-board ; and *all that hath ears to hear* are invited to be his audience.—“ He preached holiness, “ says an ingenious writer, to men’s eyes no less than their “ ears.”—Yes ; his whole life was a continual lecture of the sublimest piety, of the most refined morality, of virtue truly divine. And which is to us the crowning circumstance, all this was not barely for our intimation, but our justification also. To be a lovely and inviting model for the first ; to be a sure and immoveable ground for the last.

Does he lay aside his solemn office ? It is only to carry on the same generous design in a more condescending and familiar manner. If he meets with the Pharisees, he discovers their error, and reproves their vices ; he confutes their objections, and (in case they are not absolutely inaccessible to wise counsel) rectifies their mistakes. If he touches a feast to be present at a feast, he furnishes the richest part of the treat. *Honey and milk are under hi tongue.** He inculcates lowliness of mind on the vain ; † he recommends disinterested charity to the selfish ‡ ; and promises pardon to the weeping penitent §.—Is he retired from other company, and attended only by his own family ? His conversation is a sermon. Whether he sit in the inner chaniber, or travel on the public road, or walk through the corn-fields, he is

* Cant. iv. 11.

† Luke xiv. 8.

‡ Luke xiv. 13.

§ Luke vii. 48.

still prosecuting his great work : training up his disciples for their sacred function ; and revealing to them those oracles of heaven, which they may communicate to remote nations, and transmit to distant ages.—Is he retired from *all* company ? Even then he does not discontinue his labours of love, but adds the fervent intercessions of the night, to the charitable toils of the day. When all but himself, lay sunk in soft repose, this ADVOCATE for a guilty world, was engaged in an exercise of benevolence ; which, though secret and unobserved as the falling dews, was far more beneficial to our best interests, than those pearly drops to the languishing herbs.

Unparalleled benignity ! he *forgot* his daily food, *neglected* his necessary rest, to spend and be spent for the salvation of mankind, Neither the hardships of continual self-denial, nor the calumnies of envenomed tongues, could divert him from pursuing this favourite business.—He sought none of your honours, coveted none of your rewards, O ye children- of men ! what *he* sought, what *he* coveted, was, to wear out his life in your service, and lay it down for your ransom. This was all his desire, and this indeed he desired earnestly.—He longed (beneficent, blessed BEING !) he longed for the fatal hour. He severely rebuked one of his disciples, who would have dissuaded him from going as a voluntier to the cross. He was even *straitened* * ; under a kind of holy uneasiness, till the dreadful work was accomplished ; till he was *baptised with the baptism of his sufferings*, bathed in blood, and plunged in death.

By this most meritorious obedience and death, what did he not *deserve* ? what did he not *procure* ? he procured those inestimable blessings, the pardon of sin, and reconciliation with GOD. Procured them (O ! love unmerited and unmeasurable !) for prodigals, for traitors, for rebels.—To this it is owing, that we, who were enemies against GOD, may call the KING of heaven our father ; may

* Luke xii. 52.

have free access to him in all our difficulties; and may hope to reign with him in everlasting glory.

Was ever goodness like this goodness? were ever blessings comparable to these blessings? or purchased with such a price?—Hide, hide your diminished heads, ye little transitory donations of silver and gold. The riches of a thousand mines, bestowed to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, are the most contemptible trifles, if mentioned with the charity of the *teaching*, and *healing*, the *bleeding JESUS*. Kingdoms given away in alms, if viewed with this infinitely noble beneficence, would make just the same figure, as a spark from the summer-hearth, under the potent and boundless blaze of noon.—This is indeed *love that passeth knowledge*. *

Amidst all these miracles of magnificence and of love (any one of which would have intitled him to universal admiration, and everlasting honor) how *humble* was our SAVIOUR! he ascribes nothing to himself. His FATHER has the glory of all his marvelous acts. O humility—virtue dear to the most high GOD, and peculiarly amiable in men—never didst thou appear in so charming a dress, or so striking a light.

At his birth, not accommodated with an imperial palace, or a bed of *state*; but lodged in a stable, and laid in a manger. As he advanced in years, not attended with a *royal* equipage, or supplied from a *royal* revenue; but labouring with his own hands, and earning his bread by the sweat of his brow.—When he entered upon his ministerial office, not the least ostentatious *parade* appeared, in the performance of all his wonderful works. His manner was as modest, as his power was miraculous. So far, so very far from affecting the acclamations of the populace, that he often imposed silence on those unspeakably indebted lips, which were eager to overflow with praise, and would fain have been the trumpets of his fame.

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Though a voice from heaven proclaimed him, the BE-LOVED of his almighty FATHER; he disdained not to own the ignoble character of the *Carpenter's * Son*.— Though PRINCE of the kings of the earth, he condescended to wash the feet of mean fishermen, and to be, *in this world, as one that serveth*†. Though PROPRIETOR of the universe, and LORD of all, he was content to be more destitute than the fowls of the air, or the foxes of the desert‡: more destitute (astonishing abasement!) than the most insignificant and most hated animals.

Grandeur, we find, is apt to beget expectations of superior regard. Consequently, gives a keener edge to every affront, and renders the mind more tenderly sensible of every disrespect. But our LORD's *meekness* was as great as his dignity; and that, through a series of such *unsufferable* provocations, as were equalled by nothing, but the transcendent perfections of his person, and the sweetness of his forgiving grace.

When ridiculed and affronted, he calmly bore, and kindly overlooked the insult.—When contradicted by *petulant* and *presumptuous* sinners, he endured, with the utmost serenity of temper, their unreasonable cavils, and their obstinate perverseness.—When his invitations, his most endearing invitations, were ungratefully and stubbornly rejected; instead of remitting, he renewed them; and, with still warmer affection, importuned his hearers, not to forego *their own* felicity.—When all the winning arts of persuasion were ineffectual, he added his tears to his slighted intreaties; and lamented as a brother, when scornfully repulsed as a teacher.

When his bloody sweat tinged the stones; when his bitter cries pierced the clouds, and were enough to awaken the very rocks into compassion; his disciples slept; stupidly slept. Did their divine but slighted MASTER resent the unkindness? did he refuse to admit an excuse for their

* Matt. xlii. 55.

† Luke xxii. 27.

‡ Matt. viii. 20.

disobedience and neglect? yea, he made their excuse; and that the most tender and gracious imaginable; *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak* *. Admirable, matchless candour!—When *his enemies* had nailed him to the cross, as the basest slave, and most flagitious malefactor; when they were glutting their malice, with his sorrows, his torments, and his blood; nay, when they spared not to insult and revile him, even in his last expiring agonies; far, very far from being exasperated, this HERO of heaven repaid all their contempt and barbarity, with the most fervent supplications in their behalf. FATHER, forgive them, was his prayer: for, they know not what they do †, was his plea. Divine, adorable compassion!

Nor was his resignation less exemplary than his meekness. He went out to meet afflictions, when they came in his FATHER's name, and commissioned from his FATHER's hand. He gave, without the least reluctance, his back to the smiters, and hid not his face from shame and spitting. Though his soul, his very soul was penetrated with the keenest sensations of anguish; yet, no impatient thought discomposed his mind, no murmuring word forced its way from his lips. FATHER, not my will, but thine be done ‡, was his language; when the sorrows of death compassed him, and pains, inexpressibly severer than the pangs of dissolution, came upon him. “When they gaped upon him with their mouth, and smote him upon the cheek reproachfully. When his face was foul with spitting, and on his eye-lids was the shadow of death. When GOD delivered him to the ungodly, and turned him over into the hands of the wicked. Yea, when the ALMIGHTY set him for the mark of his arrows, and brake him with breach upon breach. When the weapons of his wrath cleft his very reins asunder, and poured his gall upon the earth.” Amidst all this distress, though exquisite and inconceivable, he sinned not by

* Matt. xxvi. 41.

† Luke xxii. 34.

‡ Luke xxi. 42.

the least irregular perturbation; but bowed his submissive head, and kissed the divine rod, and blessed his very murderers.

A famous poet has celebrated *the man of Ross*: another ingenious pen has celebrated *the man of Bath*: O! that we may admire, extol, and magnify *the MAN of Nazareth*! O! that every tongue may speak of his honor, till heaven and earth resound with his praise.—Here, ye writers of genius, here is a theme worthy of your finest perceptions, and more than equal to your most enlarged capacities. Let imagination spread her boldest wing; let description select her brightest colours; let eloquence lavish all her stores; it will be impossible to exceed, while *the Man of Nazareth* is the subject of your songs. In him dwells all the fulness of perfection. In him, the whole choir of *active* and *passive* virtues abound and shine; abound with the richest variety, and shine with the highest lustre. Infinitely surpassing that curious assemblage of costly gems, which studded the *Aronic* breast-plate*; and, as far as earthly things can represent heavenly, typified the splendor and excellency of our REDEEMER's righteousness.

In all this, he acted and he suffered, as GOD's righteous servant, and as his people's righteous surety:—By all this, he fulfilled every jot and tittle of the divine law; nay, he more than fulfilled, he magnified it. He gave it, sublime and extensive as it is, *good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over* †.—Shall you or I then say, or so much as suspect in our hearts? “CHRIST has not done enough. All this is not sufficient for our justification, unless we complete it with something of our own?”

He defied the most vigilant of his enemies to convince him of sin or defect.—A far more sagacious adversary than the Scribes and Pharisees, could detect no blemish, no error, in our LORD JESUS. The prince of this world, that infernal tyrant, who had deceived and enslaved all nations of the earth, came and found nothing in him ‡; not the least

* Exod. xxviii. 17, 18, 19, 20. † Luke vi. 38.

‡ John xiv. 30.

corruption in his nature, nor the least failure in his obedience.—Nay ; that accuser of the brethren, notwithstanding all his malignity, could not but acknowledge the unspotted sanctity of our LORD ; *I know thee, who thou art, the holy one of GOD.*

He hath done all things well ; was not barely the voice of his disciples, but the general acclamation of the people. Or, the words may be rendered, he hath done all things finely and gracefully* : with every circumstance, that constitutes the propriety and dignity, the utility and beauty of action. Has he not then done enough, to procure the divine goodwill, even for the guiltiest of mankind ?

I have glorified thee on earth †, was his own profession before the most high GOD. I have glorified thee, in all that I acted, in all that I uttered, in all that I suffered. I have displayed the beauties of thy holiness, the riches of thy grace, and the honor of *all thy* attributes. So that all thy amiable, thy majestic, thy adorable perfections, are now seen in the clearest mirror, and in the brightest light ‡.

GOD also, who is the supreme standard and unerring judge of excellency, bore his testimony to our blessed MEDIATOR. He spoke it once, yea twice, and with a voice from heaven. In the constitution of the material world, when it came from the CREATOR's hand, omniscience itself could discern no flaw. Neither could justice itself, upon the strictest enquiry, discover any failure in the obedience of our SURETY. As therefore it was said, concerning the works of creation, they are all very good § ; so was it said, and by the same almighty MAJESTY, concerning the SAVIOUR of sinners, in him I am well pleased ||.

This, for aught I know, is the capital sentence in the book of GOD. As no truth is of greater or of equal importance, so none was ever confirmed by witnesses so unexceptionable, and distinguished with circumstances so agust.—Let us, for a moment, examine the circumstances. They are per-

Mark xii. 37.

† John xvii. 4.

‡ Heb. i. 3.

§ Gen. i. 31.

|| Matt. iii. 17.

tinent to our subject. They will strike us with wonder; and, I hope, fill us with comfort.—You, Theron, are an admirer of sublime sentiments, and grand scenery. Here you will find both displayed in their utmost perfection.

“Lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the **“ SPIRIT of GOD**, decending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo! a voice from heaven, saying; this **“ is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”**—The word *lo*, is twice used, in this short narative. To engage and fix our attention, as on a fact deeply to be regarded, accompanied with words ever to be remembered.—*The heavens were opened.* Once the great and wide sea was divided, and the foundations of the world were discovered. Now the incomparably wider expanse of the skies is rent assunder, and the realms of glory are disclosed to view.—And are the crystal gates unfolded? Do the everlasting doors lift up their heads? what then, or whom may we expect to see?

Shall we see angels and arch-angels coming down, before **JESUS of Nazareth**, to pay him homage, and do him service? with this retinue he will, in due time, appear. But this is far beneath the dignity of the present occasion.—Shall we see *Moses* the great lawgiver, who conversed with **GOD** face to face, as a man converseth with his friend? shall we see *Elijah* the venerable prophet, who entered the regions of life and immortality, without passing through the vale of death? these illustrious saints will, ere long, attend on the holy mount, and lay all their honors at the feet of their **LORD**.—But now, **ONE** infinitely greater than *Moses* and *Elijah*, **ONE** infinitely superior to all the heavenly hosts, even the divine **SPIRIT** descends, alights, and abides upon **JESUS**. To dignify, beyond compare, his person; and give inestimable merit to all his actions.

This, though great and marvelous, is not the whole of the magnificent attestation. A voice not from the utmost parts of the earth, but a voice from the heaven of heavens is heard. That voice, which spoke on *Sinai*, and the mountains trembled; that voice, which spoke at the beginning, and the world was made; that voice speaks at our **SAVIOUR's** baptism.—And what is the purport of the

speech? we have reason to listen most attentively. Our all depends upon the verdict. If any iniquity, or any miscarriage, be chargeable on this our surety, we are undone irrecoverably. That voice, after a general survey of mankind, once declared; "there is none righteous, no, not one." But, to our inexpressible consolation it proclaims concerning JESUS CHRIST THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.

HE, who dwells in light inaccessible, declares concerning CHRIST; this is, not my creature, but my son. Possessed of the same divine nature, and of all my incommunicable attributes.—He is my beloved son. Who lay in my bosom from eternity, and is the one adequate object of my infinite affection. The highest angels are too low; fallen man is too mean; and JESUS alone is my beloved.—In him *I am pleased*; in him *I am well pleased*. He is the center of my approbation. On him all my complacency rests. And all other beings find favour in my sight, only as they are interested in him, or stand related to him.

After hearing this "voice from the excellent glory," can there be any cause to wonder, can we have any ground to complain, that there is no other recommendation to the supreme MAJESTY, than the person and righteousness of CHRIST. No words, no works, no characters, but those which have been stamped with the broad-seal of heaven, as true divine; and are the one grand object of GOD's everlasting good-will and ineffable delight.

You took notice, and very justly, how much the productions of nature *exceed* and *eclipse* the attempts of art. We are pleased with the correct and graceful performances of the painter. But do they equal the native blush of the rose, or the artless glow of a pea-blossom? we are charmed with a fine piece of sculpture or enameling. But is either of them fit to be compared with the natural polish, of a thousand shells which are formed in the ocean, or of a thousand seeds which spring from the earth? we admire the virtues of the antient saints; men "that were honored in their generation, and the glory of their times*" we

admire the meekness of *Moses*, and the magnanimity of *Elijah*; the exalted piety of *Isaiah*, and the enlarged wisdom of *Daniel*; the active spirit of *Joshua*, and the passive graces of *Jeremiah*. But what proportion, put them all together—what proportion do they all bear to **HIS** Obedience, *who is gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him**? who is called the **HOLY ONE** and the **JUST**†; not only by way of emphasis, but by way of *exclusion*. Because, no person is worthy of the character, no duties deserve to be mentioned, when **CHRIST** and *his* righteousness—*his only* perfect righteousness—are under consideration.

If we talk of merit what *merit* must there be in such immaculate sanctity of soul, and such exemplary integrity of conduct: such fervent zeal for **GOD**, and such compassionate good-will to man; such consummate worthiness, and extensive usefulness? Such as were utterly unknown before; have been absolutely unequalled since; and never will, or can be paralleled, throughout all ages!—O my Theron! what is the *Drop* of a bucket to the unfathomable waves of the ocean? what is a *Grain* of sand to the unmeasurable dimensions of the universe? what is an hour or a *moment* to the endless revolutions of eternity? such are all human endowments, and all human attainments, compared with **HIS** righteousness, who is “fairer than the children of men”‡; the chiefest among ten thousand§; and who received not the **SPIRIT** by measure||.

And is this righteousness designed for *Us*? Is this to be our wedding-dress, this our beautiful array, when we enter the regions of eternity? unspeakable privilege!—Is this what **GOD** has provided to supply, more than supply our loss in *Adam*! boundless benignity!—Shall we be treated by the judge of the world, as if we had performed all this unsinning and perfect obedience? well might the prophet cry out, like one lost in astonishment, *how great is his goodness*!—How great indeed! since all that the **LORD JES-**

* 1 Pet. iii. 22.

† Acts iii. 14.

‡ Psal. xlv. 2.

§ Can. v. 10.

|| John iii. 34.

US did and suffered, was done and suffered, for us men and our salvation. *Is imputed unto us for righteousness**, and is the cause, the sole but infinitely sufficient causes of our justification.

Is not your heart enamoured, my dear *Theron*, with a view of this incomprehensibly rich grace? what so excellent, what so comfortable, what so desirable, as this gift of a SAVIOUR's righteousness? Though delineated by this feeble pen, methinks it has dignity and glory enough to captivate our hearts and fire our affections: fire them with ardent and inextinguishable desires after a personal interest and propriety in it.—O! may the eternal SPIRIT reveal our REDEEMER's righteousness, in all its heavenly beauty and divine lustre: Then, I am persuaded, we shall esteem it above *every thing*; we shall regard it as the *one thing* needful; we shall count *all things* in comparison of it worthless as the chaff, and empty as the wind.

To a fallen and immortal soul, every thing else is empty as the wind. But here sinners may suck, and be satisfied with this breast of consolation: yea, millions and thousands of millions may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of its glory†.—Here we shall find the doctrine of supererogation, no longer a chimera, but a delightful reality. Here indeed is an immense suplusage, an inexhaustible fund of merit, sufficient to enrich a whole world of indigent and miserable creatures. Sufficient to make their cup run over with a superabundant fulness of peace and joy, so long as time shall last, and when time shall be no more. For, to use the apostle's weighty argument, “ If by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, JESUS CHRIST†.” Is it reasonable, that we should ascribe more power to *Adam*,

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* The words in the *Italic* character, are a testimony from the celebrated Mr. HOOKER, *Epist. Pol. B. V.*

† *Isa. lxvi. 2.*

‡ *Rom. v. 17.*

a mere man, in making us sinners ; than to CHRIST, the GOD-Man, in making us righteous ? No verily. If *one* offence, committed by one man, made all his posterity chargeable with guilt, and liable to death, MUCH MORE shall the manifold instances of our divine REDEEMER's obedience, absolve all his people from condemnation and punishment, and intitle them to the honors and joys of immortality.

Think not, that what I have written, is the language of rant. It is a paraphrase, though I must confess, but a scanty paraphrase, on *David's* practice and *David's* faith. *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day**, for I know not the numbers thereof. The supereminent righteousness of CHRIST, and the great salvation obtained thereby, he declares, shall be the chosen, the principal subject of his discourse. Not on a sabbath only, but on every day of the week, of the year, of his life. Not barely at the stated returns of solemn devotion, but on every social, interview, all the day long.—Why will he thus dwell perpetually and invariably dwell, on this darling theme ? because, he knew not the numbers thereof. It is impossible to measure the value, or exhaust the fulness of these blessings. The righteousness is unspeakable, the salvation is everlasting. To compute the duration of the one, numbers fail ; to describe the excellency of the other, words are at a loss.

This will appear in a clearer light, if, to the perfection of his obedience, we add the majesty of our SAVIOUR's person. A proper subject, for some future letter.—In the meantime, let me desire my friend, the friend of my bosom, to contemplate our LORD JESUS under that lovely and august character, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS†. And for my part, I will not cease to pray, that a sense of this supremely grand and precious righteousness may be written on my *Theron's* heart.—On those living tables, may it be like figures cut on a rock of solid marble, or inscribed on the bark of a growing tree : be lasting in its duration as the former, and spreading in its influence as the latter. It will

* *Psal.* lxxi. 16.

† *Exod.* xv. 11.

then be a sure proof, that his name is written in the book of life ; and it shall then be a most pleasing pattern for the affection, the gratitude, and the friendship, of his

ASPASIO.

P. S. You give a most astonishing account of the *pressure* of the atmosphere. Astonishing indeed ! that we should be continually overwhelmed, with such a load of air ; quite dreadful to think upon ! yet not be crushed to death no, nor be sensible of the least weight.—This, I think, may serve to represent the state of a sinner, unawakened from carnal security. Loads, more than mountainous loads of of guilt, are upon his soul, and he perceives not the burden. For this reason, he is under no apprehension of the vengeance and fiery indignation, which he deserves ; he has no superlative esteem for the atonement and merits of the REDEEMER, which alone can deliver him from the wrath to come. But, if once his conscience feels, what his lips, perhaps, have often repeated ; “ we do earnestly repent us “ of these our misdoings, the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable ; ” then how will he prize such a text : *The load laid on CHRIST the iniquity of us all !* How will he long for an interest in the LAMB of GOD, *which taketh away the sin of the world !* Then, that JESUS who has *finished the transgression, and brought into everlasting righteousness,* will be all his salvation, and all his desire.



LETTER VIII.



ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,

I HAVE just been reading that exquisitely fine piece of sacred history, *the life of Joseph*. A history—illuminated with a variety of surprising incidents, and unexpected revolutions—ennobled with the most heroic instances of triumphant virtue, both amidst the allurements of temptation, and under the pressures of affliction—animated with such tender and pathetic, such melting and alarming touches of natural eloquence, as every reader must *feel*, and every true critic will *admire*.

When I came to that remarkable injunction, with which the generous viceroy dismissed his brethren; *ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt* *—I paused—I pondered—I was struck. Certainly, this was enjoined, not by way of ostentation; but an account of the pleasure, which, he knew, it would yield the good old Patriarch.—Was it some kind prompting angel, or the voice of gratitude and devotion, that whispered in my ear? “should not the children of man likewise tell one another of *all the glory* †, which their REDEEMER possesses in heaven and on earth?

* Gen. xlv. 13.

† To see the glory of CHRIST, is the grand blessing, which our LORD solicits and demands for his disciples, in his last solemn intercession. *John. xvii. 24*

“ will not this afford them the sublimest pleasure here, and
 “ be a source of the most refined satisfaction for ever and
 “ ever?”

Though I had almost determined to write no more, till you could make a demand, upon the foot of *value received*; willingly I recede from my intended resolution, and obey this pleasing hint.—But “ who can declare the noble acts
 “ of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, or shew forth all his
 “ praise?”—However, if I may but *lisp out* his adorable name, and present my friend with a *glimpse*, or a *broken* view of his divine perfections, even this will be desirable and delightful. Far more desirable and delightful, than to behold *Rome* in its magnificence, *St. Paul* in the pulpit, or king *Solomon* on his throne*.

Let me take the *lark* for my pattern; which, as I was lately returning from an evening ramble, attracted my observation.—Warbling her CREATOR’s praise, she mounted, as though she meant to carry her tribute of harmony unto the very gates of heaven. Having reached, at last, her highest elevation, and perceiving herself at an immense distance from the starry regions, she dropped on a sudden to the earth; and discontinued, at once, both to sing, and to soar. Now the morning appears, and is awakening the world, our little songster retunes her throat, and re-exerts her wings.—As I have endeavoured, very imperfectly endeavoured, to strike out a *shadowy* draught of our LORD’s complete obedience; I would, though absolutely unequal to the task, once more resume my pen, and attempt—what would I attempt?—nothing like a display, but only a faint *sketch* of his personal dignity. Such as may just serve to demonstrate, that the man of *Nazareth* is the GOD of heaven.

First let me observe, that for some time past, we have been visited with the most uncomfortable weather; *dewless nights*, and *sultry days*. The firmament was more like a glowing furnace, than the region of refreshing rain.—The

* These, if I remember right, are the three things, which *St. Augustine* declared, would, beyond all others, most eminently gratify his *curiosity*.

earth lay parched with thirst, and chapped with heat. The meadows were drained of their humidity, and all the flowers hung their fading heads.—The streams, which used to flow paralld with the verdant margin, abandoned their banks. Diminished and discoloured, they sunk to the very bottom of their oozy channels.—Nature in general seemed to be resigning the “robe of beauty, for the garment of “heaviness.” *Drought* was in all our borders; and *famine*, we feared, was not far behind.—Clouds of dust, obscured the air; tarnished the hedges; and almost smothered the traveler. But not one cloud of *fleecy white* appeared, to variegate the blue expanse, or give us hopes of a reviving shower*.

It reminded me of that awful threatening, denounced by *Moses* on a wicked people; “the heaven, that is over thy head, shall be brass; and the earth, that is under thee, shall be iron†.”—It made me apprehensive of that terrible state, which the prophet so emphatically describes; “the field is wasted, and the land mourneth. The seed is rotten under the clods, and the harvest perisheth. The garners are laid desolate, and the barns are broken down. The new wine is dried up; the oil languisheth; and all the trees of the field are withered.—How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed. Yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. Because the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness‡.”—But, blessed be the divine PROVIDENCE, our tears are vanished, and a most joyful change has taken place, The LORD hath “sent a gracious rain upon his inheritance, and refreshed it, when it was weary”.§

Yesterday in the afternoon, the wind shifting to the South, roused the *dormant* clouds, and brought some of

* At such a juncture, how pertinent is the question proposed by the almighty MAJESTY’S? *Job xxxviii. 37. 38.*

† *Duet, xxvii. 23.*

‡ *Joel. i. 10. &c.*

§ *Psal. lxxviii. 9.*

those agreeable strangers on its wings.—At first, they came sailing in small, and thin, and scattered parties. Anon, the flying squadrons advanced in larger detachments, more closely wedged, and more deeply laden. Till at last, the great rendezvous completed, they formed into a body of such depth, and extended their wings with such a sweep, as darkened the sun, and overspread the whole hemisphere.

Just at the close of day, the gales which escorted the spongy treasures, retired; and resigned their charge to the disposal of a *calm*. Not a breeze shook the most tremulous leaf. Not a curl ruffled the smooth expansive lake.—All things were still, as in *attentive expectation*. The russet heath, and the slippery lawn, seemed to gasp after the hovering moister. Nature, with all her suppliant tribes, in expressive pleading silence, solicited the falling fruitfulness. Nor pleaded long, nor solicited in vain.

The showers, gentle, soft, and balmy, descend. The vessels of heaven unload their precious freight, and enrich the impoverished glebe. The liquid sweetness, which is incomparably more beneficial than trickling silver, distils. Through all the night, it distils; and cools the torrid air; and revives the languishing earth; and cherishes every living thing.

Now the sun, mild and refulgent, issues through portals of the East. Pleased, as it were, to have emerged from the late abyss of darkness, he looks abroad with peculiar gaiety, and the most engaging splendor. He looks through the disburdened air, and finds a gladdened world, that wants nothing but his all-cheering beams, to render its satisfaction complete.

The Glory comes! Hail to thy rising Ray,
Great Lamp of Light, and second source of day!
Who robe the World, each nipping Gale remove,
Treat every Sense and beam creating Love*.

At his auspicious approach, the freshened mountains lift their heads, and smile. The garden opens its aromatic

* These beautiful lines are borrowed from the SEAPIECE, Canto IV. A *variate philosophical, and descriptive poem*, written by my ingenious friend, Dr. Kirkpatrick.

stores; and breathes, as from a fuming altar, balm to the smell, and incense to the skies. The little hills, crowned with springing plenty, *clap their hands* on every side. The moistened plains, and irrguous valleys, *laugh and sing*: While their waters, lately exhausted, again are made deep, and their rivers run like oil*.

The whole earth, *saturated* with the bounty of heaven, and *flushed* with humid life, wears a thousand marks of gratitude and complacency. Washed by the copious rain, how bright and vivid is the universal verdure! the *green carpet* below, may almost vie with the *blue canopy* above.—The forest, and every tree, burnish their colours, and array themselves in their finest apparel. Which as on a day of general festivity; is delicately decked with gems.—From every pasture and form all the grove, the voice of *pleasure* and of *melody* resounds. While the officious zephyrs waft the floating harmony, blended with native perfumes; gently waft them to the senses, and touch the very soul with transport.

Could there be a more brilliant appearance, or more exuberant demonstrations of joy, even to celebrate the anniversary of *nature's birth*? with what admirable propriety has the *psalmist* compared yonder orient sun, in all his sparkling grandeur, to a young exulting *bridegroom*†; who comes forth, with every heightened ornament from his chamber, to shew himself in the most distinguished period of his life, and to receive the blessing which consummates his happiness!

This most charming and equally majestic scene, recalls to my memory that fine description of the MESSIAH, extant in the last lovely strains of the Israelitish swan‡—HE shall be welcome and salutary as the light of the morning;

I.

* Ezek. xxxii. 24. † Psal. xix. 5.

‡ *Israelitish swan*—That is, *David*, so called by *Aspasio*, in allusion to those well-known lines of the poet.

when the sun ariseth, to chase the malignant shades, and pour day through the reviving world. He shall be as the light of *a morning*, that is most serenely fair; *without* either storms to disturb or *clouds* to obscure the glorious, the delightful dawn. Yea, his appearance shall be *more beautiful*, and his influences *more beneficial* *, *than the clear shining* of that grand luminary, *after* a night of settled gloom, and showers of incessant rain. When his beams shed animating warmth, and vital lustre, on the tender grass impearled with dews, and on all the green treasures of the teeming earth.

As we have already contemplated the blessed JESUS, under the amiable character of the JUST ONE; the foregoing passage of scripture exhibits him to our faith, in the more majestic quality of THE LORD OF GLORY.—Or rather, unites the two grand peculiarities, which render him unparalleled in his personal, and all-sufficient in his mediatorial capacity.

Great, unspeakably great and glorious would our SAVI-OUR appear; if we had no other manifestations of his excellency, than those which preceded his mysterious incarnation.—In the antient scriptures, he stands characterized as the supreme object of GOD's ineffable complacency; vested with a glory, prior to the birth of time, or the existence of things; even the glory, which he had with the FATHER, before the world was †—He is every where represented as the ultimate desire, and the only hope, of all the ends of the earth; the seed, of inestimable and universal importance, in whom all nations should be blessed.—In those royal or rather divine acts and monuments, he is recognized, as the RULER of GOD's people: whose dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation.—How august, how venerable, is the SOVEREIGN! since it was the highest honor of the most eminent saints, and renowned

* More beautiful, more beneficial, than the clear shining. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

† John xv. 1. 5.

monarchs *, to act his harbingers. The splendor of the temple, the richness of its ornaments, and the solemnity of its services, were the ensigns of his grandeur ; where his sacred regalia, intended to usher him into the world with becoming state.

Sacrifices, instituted and used, almost from the foundation of the world, give us every exalted apprehensions of CHRIST : who is the bright, the polar star, to which all those needles invariably pointed. Should we see galleries built, avenues opened, passages hung with scarlet and embroidery, in order to introduce some great personage to the observation of the public. If these preparations had been made, with incessant assiduity, for four months only how high an idea should we form, concerning the expected stranger ? What then must we think of that MESSIAH ; the dignity of his person, and the greatness of his work ? For whose coming preparation was made, by a grand train of sacrifices and and costly rites, through the long, long space of *four thousand years* ? On whom the attention of mankind was fixed, ever since the fall of *Adam* ; and for whom was all the expectation of the people of GOD, in every age of the world.—Should we not think him worthy to be (what the *Jews* reckoned their temple and sacrifices) “ the excellency of our strength ; the joy of our glory ; and the desire of our eyes † ? ”

Every inspired prophet was his herald ; deputed to emblazon his perfections, or foretel his coming ; to give us a portrait of his person, a display of his offices, or a detail of his benefits. Let us hear one speaking the sentiments of all.—GOD the SAVIOUR came from Teman, “ and the HOLY ONE from mount Paran. ” His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise ‡. Thunders

* Moses, for instance, and Joshua, David and Solomon, were types, strongly marked types, of our great LAWGIVER and DELIVERER, of our divine RULER and PREACHER. But none prefigured the blessed JESUS more eminently than Melchisedek.

† Ezek. xxiv. 21. 25.

‡ See Habak. iii. The greatest part of which sublime Ode, refers to the wonderful works, recorded by Moses and Joshua.

sounded his trumpet, and the lightnings waved his banners. Before him went the pestilence, for the destruction of his enemies; but for the deliverance of "Israel, he rode upon his horses and chariots of salvation. The mountains saw him, and they trembled; the everlasting hills, and they bowed their heads". *The abyss uttered her voice*, and acknowledged his sovereignty through her deepest caverns; the *towering surges lifted up their hands*, and remained in a suspended posture, while his people passed through their opening lines.—Indeed, both depth, and height, and every creature, have paid him homage, and done him service. And shall not we, my dear Theron, submit to his righteousness? Submit! Shall we not embrace it; rely on it; and with joyful hearts, with triumphant tongues, say, there is none, there is nothing, like it*.

Does not all mankind agree to estimate the merit of the practice, according to the dignity of the person? If a neighbour of inferior rank, visit some poor afflicted wretch, in a coarse garret, and on a tattered bed; it is no very extraordinary favour. But if a lady of the first distinction, or a nobleman of the highest order, perform the same office; it is a much more remarkable, a much more admired instance of self-denying charity. On the foot of this calculation, to what *supereminent* height will the worthiness of our LORD's obedience rise! It will rise, like some magnificent edifice, whose basis rests upon the center; whose dimensions fill the hemisphere; and whose turrets glitter in the sky. Or rather, it will extend itself to emmensity; where length, and breadth, and all dimensions are lost. Especially, if we consider—The *names* he bears; and the *honours*, he receives—the *works*, he has done; and those *mightier* works, he is appointed to do.

The *names*, he bears.—The title, by which *JESUS* of *Nazareth* is distinguished in the heavenly world; the name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, is **KING** of Kings,

and **LORD** of Lords*.—The description, which the incomprehensible **JEHOVAH** gives of the surety for sinful men, runs in this exalted strain; *the man that is MY FELLOW*†. Which the Apostle explains, in that memorable and majestic clause; *he thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD*‡. The **HOLY GHOST**, speaking of the Virgin's Son, enumerates several grand distinctions, both of his person, and his office. He styles the child, that should be born, *the WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the MIGHTY GOD, the PRINCE OF PEACE*§.—The same inspired writer, though eloquent above all orators, and more sublime than the softest poet, cries out in rapturous astonishment; *who can declare his generation*||? What pencil can paint, what language can express, his matchless excellencies? and may we not with equal propriety demand; who can declare the meritorious perfection of his righteousness? It is precious beyond comparison; beyond imagination.

The honors which our **LORD** receives, are proportioned to the illustrious characters, which he sustains.—John the baptist, than whom a greater prophet, or a better Judge, was not born of woman, professes himself unworthy, to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his shoes¶: unworthy, though a burning and shining light in his generation, to perform the meanest service to this **PRINCE** of heaven.—Stephen, who leads the van in the noble army of christian martyrs, beheld such a representation of his crucified **MASTER**'s glory; as enabled him to exult with divine delight, even amidst the furious assaults of his persecutors, and under the insupportable blows of his murderers|||. Assured, that **JESUS** has all power in heaven and earth, by an act of the

* Rev. xix. 16.

† Zech. xiii. 7.

‡ Phil. ii. 6. Some writers, I am aware, have endeavoured to interpret away this evidence of our **LORD**'s divine nature. But I think with great injury to the context, and no less violence to the phrase.

§ Isa. ix. 6.

|| Isa. liii. 8.

¶ Mark i. 26.

||| Acts vii. 60.

most solemn worship, he commits his departing soul (that unspeakably important trust !) to the omnipotent hand of his REDEEMER *.—Nor by the first martyr alone, but in all churches of the saints, and in every age of christianity has the LORD JESUS been addressed, as the constant object of his people's adoration ; and acknowledged, as the ever faithful depositary of their eternal interest.

When Isaiah beheld a visionary manifestation of CHRIST, the first-born sons of light were waiting around him, in postures of dutiful submission. These celestial being, whose very feet are too bright for mortals to view, vied their faces before his infinitely superior effulgence. The seraphs, who are all zeal and all love celebrate his perfections, and cried one to another, the whole earth is full of his glory.—and is not heaven also filled with his glory ? Does not heaven likewise resound with his praise ? The beloved disciple, in a vision no less clear and far more magnificent, beholds the LAMB that was slain, standing in the midst of a resplendant throne. Which is most beautifully adorned with a circling rainbow, and terribly dignified, by the blaze of lightnings ; and awfully surrounded, with peals of thunder. Before this august throne, and at the disposal of the once slaughtered SAVIOUR, are seven lamps of burning fire ; expressive of the DIVINE SPIRIT, in all the variety of his miraculous gifts, and sanctifying graces.†—Four and twenty elders, clothed in white raiment, with crowns on their heads, and the harps of GOD in their hands, fall prostrate in deepest homage before the LAMB. They strike the golden strings, and sing that sublime eucharistic hymn ; thou art worthy to take the book, and “ to open the seals “ therof : for thou hast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD “ by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and haste made us, unto our GOD, “ kings and priests †.”

Behold the hierarchies of angels : they are in number ten thousand times ten thousand—all are children of the king

* Acts vii. 59. † Rev. iv. 5.

† Rev. v. 9. 10.

immortal, and each is brighter than the morning star.—Hark ! they raise their voices, and awaken all the powers of harmony. Hosannas, loud and rapturous, fill the eternal region.—Do you enquire ; who is the cause of this sacred Jubilee, and what is the burden of this celestial song ? The very person we are extolling, and the very extolling, and the very doctrine we would establish. Worthy, they cry worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and blessing.—Nor these alone, but every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, join the immense chorus. In sweet responsive strains of melody and devotion, they sing and speak praises to IMMANUEL : blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever *.

This you observe, is the devout acknowledgment, not only of the cherubim, the seraphim, and the spirits of just men made perfect, but of every creature.—The sun, the moon, and the stars, which garnish the *heavens*—Beasts and creeping things, mountains and hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, which replenish the earth—metals and minerals gems and fossils, the subterraneous riches of nature, or things which are under the earth—even all those objects, which my Theron lately contemplated, do, each in a proper way, magnify the LORD JESUS. They bear witness to his power as their CREATOR ; they are subservient to his designs, as our MEDIATOR ; and, in this manner, they all glorify his holy name.

Under such views of the blessed REDEEMER, enlarged and elevated even to astonishment, is it possible to over-rate the worth of his obedience ? Is it possible to lay too much efficacy to his vicarious righteousness.

To the honors, which he receives, let us add the works which he has done. By these, in the days of his flesh, were displayed the greatness of his glory, and the magnificence of his majesty.

Behold ! says the almighty FATHER: My servant ; he who condescends to become my servant in the matchless work of redemption ; shall deal prudently, shall conduct himself with all the dignity and all the sanctity of wisdom. In consequence of which, he shall be exalted, be extolled, and be very high *.—The paraphrase of the Jewish commentators on this beautiful climax is thought inadequate, not contemptible. “ The MESSIAH, they say shall “ be higher than Abraham more illustrious than Moses, and “ exalted above the angels of light, even above the prime “ ministers of heaven.”—What follows, is an attempt to render this exposition somewhat less defective.

Here, could you open my chamber-door, and throw a glance upon your friend, you would find him in the same attitude, and under the same perplexity, which were formerly observed in *Phocion*. Sitting one day, amidst an assembly of the people, and preparing to make a public oration, he appeared uncommonly thoughtful. Being asked the reason “ I am considering, said he, how I may shorten ; “ what I shall have occasion to speak.”—The compass of my subject, would demand many volumes ; whereas, the limits of my letter, will allow but a few paragraphs.

Our LORD gave sight to the *blind*. He poured day upon those hopeless and benighted eyes, which had never been visited with the least dawning ray.—The *dumb*, at his command, found a ready tongue, and burst into songs of praise. The *deaf* were all ear, and listened to the joyful sound of salvation.—The *lame*, lame from their very birth, threw aside their crutches and full of transport and exultation, leaped like the bounding roe†.—He restored floridity and beauty to the flesh, emaciated by consuming sickness or encrusted with a loathsome leprosy.—All manner of diseases, though blended with the earliest seeds of life, and riveted in the constitution by a long inveterate predominancy—Diseases, that baffled the skill of the physician, and

* Isa. liii. 12.

† We have the finest representation of this event given us by the inspired historian: Acts ii. 8.

mocked the force of the medicine.—*these* he cured, not by tedious applications, but in the twinkling of an eye; not by costly prescriptions, or painful operations, but by a *word* from his mouth, or a *touch* from his hand; nay, by the *fringe* of his garment, or the bare act of his will.

Any *one* of these miracles, had been enough to endear the character, and eternize the memory of another person. But they were *common* things, matters of *daily* occurrence, with our divine MASTER. The years of his public ministry, were an unintermitted series of such healing wonders? or, if any intermission took place, it was only to make way for the more invaluable miracles of spiritual beneficence.—Let us consider these things, my dear friend. Let us pursue and dwell upon these hints. Let us familiarize to our minds the power and glory of *CHRIST*. Then we shall see abundant cause to acknowledge—with gratitude and joy to acknowledge, that “our help is laid upon ONE that “is mighty”. That he is the rock, and his work is perfect†”.

Behold him exercises his dominion over the vegetable creation. A fig-tree, adorned with the most promising spread, of leaves, but unproductive of the expected fruit, withers away at his rebuke, it is not only stripped of its verdant honors, but dried up from the very roots ‡, and perishes for ever. A fearful, yet significant intimation, of that final ruin §, which will overtake the specious hypocrite. Who, lavish in outward profession, is destitute of inward piety.

His eye looked through the world of waters; discerned the fish, which had just swallowed a piece of silver coin; and guided its course to *Peter's* hook ||. 'Tis true, when

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* Psal. lxxxix. 19.

† Deut. xxii 4.

‡ Mark. xi. 13.

§ It is pleasing to observe, that the two miracles, in which our LORD displayed his punitive or vindictive power, were exercised not on the human race, but on the insectible vegetable, or some unclean animals.

|| Matt. xvii. 27. How wonderful is this seemingly little miracle! or rather, what a cluster of wonders is comprized in this single act!

the gatherers of the sacred tax came, to collect his share for the reparation of the temple, he had not a sufficiency of money, to satisfy so small a demand*. Yet he takes occasion, from this most abject poverty, to manifest the immensity of his riches. He makes the great deep his revenue; and bids the scaly nations bring him their tribute. Never was such indigence associated with such magnificence! And never, never let us forget, that the indigence was ours, the magnificence all his own!

The waters themselves, it may be said, are far more unmanageable, than their inhabitants. Who can controul that outrageous element? Which has destroyed so many gallant fleets, with the armies they bore; and which would laugh at the opposition of the united world—the LORD JESUS walks upon its rolling surges†. The rolling surges, suspend their fury; they even forget their fluid nature, to support the footsteps of their GOD.—He speaks, and the most tempestuous agitations are a calm. The maddening ocean, like the dispossessed demoniac, comes to the feet of JESUS, sedate, and peaceable and in its right mind. It is true; the waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly; but yet the LORD, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, is mightier‡.

The winds are yet more ungovernable, than the maddening ocean. When these are hurled§ abroad, to shake the earth, and toss the seas, who can curb their rage? What can withstand their impetuosity? Even the boisterous winds hear the SAVIOUR's voice; and, as soon as they hear, obey. His voice, more powerful to restrain, than brazen dungeons to confine, chides the || furious whirlwind. The furious whirlwind is awed into immediate silence. That which

* About fourteen-pence.

† He treadeth upon the waves of the sea, is one of the prerogatives ascribed to the supreme KING, Job ix. 8.

‡ Psal. xciii. 5.

§ This is the literal translation of that beautiful Hebrew phrase, which occurs Jonah. 4.

|| Matt. viii. 26.

a moment ago, heaved the billows to the clouds, and filled with outrage the howling firmament; now, gently whispers among the shrouds, and scarcely curls the smooth expanse.

Something there is, even within the narrow compass of our own breasts, which affords room for more signal exertions of DEITY, than the turbulent billows, or the resistless storm. Agreeably to the suggestion of a prophet; *for lo! He that formeth the mountains; and createth the wind; and as a more pregnant proof of divine perfection, declareth unto man what is his thought, the GOD of hosts is his name**. The possessor of such surpassing power and wisdom, can be no other, than the supreme and only potentate.—And who is this, but JESUS CHRIST? *he knew, what was in man†*. He discerned the secrets of the heart; discerned the latent purpose, before it disclosed itself in action; even before it was uttered in speech; nay, while it lay yet an unformed embryo in the mind.

His glance pierced into futurity: espied events, in all their circumstance ‡, and with the greatest perspicuity, before they came into being. The hid ten things of darkness were open, the contingencies of the morrow were present, to his all pervading eye. Nay, the unthought of revolutions, that were to happen in distant ages; the astonishing catastrophe of dissolving nature, and the awful process of everlasting judgment; all these he clearly foresaw, and particularly foretold.

Nor does he only penetrate the recesses, but over-run the operations of the soul.—He so intimated a multitude of sacrilegious wretches, that they fled, not before his drawn sword, or bent bow, but at the shaking of his scourge §.—He so awaked, by one short remonstrance, an assembly of conceited and ostentatious Pharisees; that they could gainsay, was a tacit acknowledgment of their guilt; and

* Amos iv. 13.

† John ii. 25.

‡ In all their circumstances—Set a very remarkable exemplification of this particular, xiv. 13.

§ John ii. 14. 15. &c.

not to endure, must cover them with public confusion.—With a word, the most mild and gentle * imaginable, he flung terror into a whole band of armed men. Such as blasted all their courage; and laid them as if struck with lightning, stunned and prostrate on the ground.

All hearts are in his hand. He turneth them, as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will †; with as much ease, and with the same efficacious sway, as the current of the rivers is altered and determined by every inflection of the channel.—Follow me, was his call to James and John: follow me ‡, was all he said to Levi the publican. Though the first was engaged in all the ardour of business; though the last was sitting at the very receipt of custom; yet both he and they, without any demur, without the least delay, left the lucrative employ; left their nearest relations, and resigned their earthly all, to attend a poor and despised MASTER.—Their acquaintance, no doubt, would remonstrate a thousand inconveniencies. Their enemies would not fail to censure them, as rash enthusiasts. But all these considerations were lighter than dust, were less than nothing, when set in competition with two words only from JESUS of Nazareth. Impressed, deeply impressed by his powerful summons, such loss they counted gain, and such obloquy glory.—And shall we count it too high an honor, or too grand an office, for his obedience unto death, to make us perfectly righteous before GOD, without the co-operation of any works, or any holy walking of our own?

He planted bowels of compassion in the unfeeling avaricious wretch; and elevated, beyond the height of the stars, desires that lay groveling even below the mire of the swine. The slaves of sin he restored to the liberty of righteousness; and unhappy creatures, who were degenerated into the likeness of the devil, he renewed after the image of the blessed GOD.—These were the effects of his personal preaching; these are still the conquests of his glorious gospel; and do not these declare his dominion over the intel-

* John xviii. 6.

† Prov. xxi. 1.

‡ Mark ii. 14.

lectual economy? That the world of minds, as well as of material nature, is open to his inspection, and subject to his controul?

The dead seem to be more remote from human cognition, than the secrets of the breast; less liable to any human jurisdiction, than the warring elements. What potentate can issue a writ of release to the grave? or cite the dislodged soul, to re-enter the breathless corpse?—Yet this even this, our mighty MEDIATOR executed. He opened the eyes, which were sunk in shades, and sealed in the Tomb. He bid the heart, that had forgot its vital motion, spring into life and activity. The crimson hood, long congealed by the icy hand of death; which had not only lost its pulse by stagnation, but likewise changed its very texture by putrefaction*; circulates, at his order, all horrid and mantling with health, through the wondering veins.—The spirit, which had taken its flight into the invisible state, which had taken its place in eternal habitations, returns, at our REDEEMER's signal, to the tenement of mouldering clay; and, by the amazing visit, proclaims his sovereignty over those unknown realms, and their mysterious inhabitants.

As he recals from, so he admits into, the abodes of future happiness. His hands, when swollen with wounds, and nailed to the tree, evidently sustained *the key of hell and of death*†. Then, even then, he opened and he shut either the gates of the grave, or the portals of paradise. What he says to the penitent thief, is the language of supreme authority; *to day shalt thou be with me in paradise*‡. It is a royal *Mandamus*. He speaks from the cross, as from a throne. While executed as a malefactor, he not only dispenses pardon, but disposes of seats in glory.

Does our LORD's superiority extend to those malignant beings, the devil and his angels?—Even these, in spite of all their formidable strength§, and inextinguishable rage,

* John xi. 39.

† Rev. i. 18.

‡ Luke xxiii. 42.

Milton, describing the power of the apostate angels says;

*The least of Whom could wield
These Elements; and arm him with the force
Of all their Rage*

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he makes his footstool. He brake the teeth of those infernal lions; and rescued the helpless prey, on which their bloody jaws were closing. At his command, they abandon their conquests? and relinquish, however indignant, however reluctant, their long accustomed habitations. His single command, more forcible than ten thousand thunderbolts, dispossesses a whole legion* of those fierce and haughty spirits: drives them, all terrified and deprecating severer vengeance, to seek rest in solitary deserts, or to herd with the most sordid brutes.

As the blessed JESUS treads upon the necks of those powers of darkness, he receives the willing services of the *Angels of light*. The Angels, in comparison of men, are styled *Gods*. How great must be their lustre and glory! since their very appearance struck prophets almost dead with fear and tempted even an Apostle to idolatry. Yet, when the first-begotten SON is brought into the world, these Gods are commanded to worship him†. Though they *excel* in strength, and are active as flames of fire; yet they fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words. They graced the solemnity of his birth; they attended him, after his temptation in the wilderness; they were the first joyful preachers of his triumphant resurrection; and, seated as he is on the right-hand of the MAJESTY in the highest.

———They stand with Wings, outspread,
 Listening to catch their Master's least command,
 And fly through nature, e'er the moment end.

Behold him, now doing according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth—swaying the scepter, over the legions of hell, and the powers of nature—exercising dominion in the hearts of men, in the territories of the grave, and the mansions of disembodied spirits.—Doing all this, not as a delegate, but as a

* Mark v. 91

† Compare Heb. i. 6. with Psal. xcvi. 7.

sovereign. Not by a communicated ability but by his own own omnipotence. Pursuant to the tenour of that majestic claim, my FATHER worketh, and I work *. Not, my FATHER worketh by me ; but, I work in concert with the FATHER. I perform the same marvelous things ; from the same underived power ; and by the same supreme authority.

Then let my Theron determine—under such views of our SAVIOUR's unequalled majesty, and unbounded sovereignty, let him determine—whether it be safer, to rest our infinite and eternal interests, on our own righteousness, rather than on his.

We have selected some few manifestations of our REDEEMER's excellent greatness. Even the evangelical historians, give us no larger a proportion to a copious harvest. Yea, were they all particularly enumerated, and circumstantially displayed, they would appear inconsiderable ; compared with those far more distinguished trophies of almighty power, which he has decreed, in some future period to erect.

He will gather to his sacred fold, the people of his ancient church ; though they are dispersed into all lands, and most inveterately prejudiced against the truth of his gospel.—How mighty was his hand, how illustriously outstretched his arm, when he made a path through the surges of the ocean, drove the torrent of Jordan backwards ; and fetched rivers of waters from the flinty rock ! far more mighty will be its operations, when he shall remove the seemingly unsurmountable obstructions, to the general restoration of the Jews ; shall throw all their religious apprehensions into a new channel ; and cause tears of penitential sorrow to start from their stony eyes, confession of unfeigned faith to issue from their blaspheming lips.—Yet thus it will assuredly be. In the volume of the divine book it is written, they shall look on him, whom they have pierced, and mourn †. They shall adore as the MESSIAH, the once despised Galilean ;

* John v. 17.

† Zech. xiii. 32.

and fix all their hopes of final felicity on that very PERSON, whom their fathers slew and hanged on a tree.

Amazing revolution in the religious world! Yet this together with the destruction of Antichrist, and illumination of the benighted Gentiles, may pass for small incidents; compared with those stupendous events, which will dignify, and signalize the closing scene of affairs.

Then, shall the LORD JESUS be manifested in unspeakable glory: and exert such acts of omnipotence, as will be the terror of hell, the joy of heaven, the wonder of eternity.—Then, will he put an end to time, and bid the springs of nature cease to operate.—Then, shall his tremendous trumpet rend the universal vault, and pierce the dormitories of the dead.—Then, will he shake the earth out of its place*, and before his majestic presence the heavens shall flee away.—Then shall, a nation only but multitudes multitudes of nations, be born in a day†; yea rather, in an hour, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.—All that are asleep in the beds of death; even those who, perishing in tempests, are sunk to the bottom of the ocean; or, swallowed up by Earthquakes, are buried at the center of the globe; all shall hear his voice; and hearing, shall awake; and, awaking shall come forth.—Every human body though ages have revolved, since it gave up the ghost; though worms have devoured the flesh, and dissolution mouldered the bones; though its parts have been grinded by the teeth of beasts, or consumed by the rage of fire; dissipated in viewless winds, or scattered over the boundless globe; lost to our senses, and lost even to our imagination; yet will every human body then be restored; its limbs reassembled, and not an atom wanting; its frame rebuilt and never be demolished more.

Then shall the unnumbered myriads of departed spirits return from their separate abodes; and, commissioned by HIM who is the resurrection and the life, reanimate each his organized system.—Then, shall satan and his accompli-

* Job iv. 6.

† Isai. xlv. 8.

cies, those execrable and horrid criminals, be dragged from their dungeons of darkness, and receive their doom at the **REDEEMER's** tribunal.—Then, will misery and happiness, both consummate, and both everlasting, be awarded by **JESUS** of *Nazareth*—then, will he consign over the *ungodly* world, and the rebellious angels, to flames of hell and to agonies of despair. Then, will he invest the *righteous* with the inheritance of heaven, and instate them in the fulness of joy.—His word is fate. His sentence is irrevocable. Immutability seals, and eternity executes, whatever he decrees.

And has *this* **JESUS**, so glorious, so majestic, so adorable—has **HE** vouchsafed to take our nature, and become our righteousness? was **HE** made under the law? did **HE** fulfil all its demands? give perfect satisfaction to the *penal*; and yield perfect obedience to the *preceptive*? On purpose, that the merit of *all* might be made over to us?—Astonishing condescension! ineffable grace! what thanks are due, to such infinitely rich goodness!—What a remedy is here, for the impotence and guilt of fallen man!—What a sure foundation of hope, what an abundant source of joy, to every one that believeth?

It is declared by the oracle of **GOD**, that such an **HIGH-PRIEST** became us, was absolutely necessary for our obnoxious, and ruined condition, “who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*—Who is heir of all things; “and the brightness of the eternal **FATHER's** glory†”. It appears, I flatter myself, from the letter already in your hand, that **CHRIST** fully answers the former character. From this epistle, I hope it will appear, that he is the very person described in the latter text. From both, that he is what his prophet styles, “**A SAVIOUR** and a great one†”.

Estimate now, my dear friend, estimate if you can, the dignity and excellency of this sublime **PERSON**. Then may you learn, how to state the *worth* of his righteousness, and the *degree* of affiance suited to his merits. Rather you

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will preceive, that his spotless birth, his perfectly obedient life, his exquisitely bitter death, are a satisfaction of unknown dignity; *precious**, far beyond all graces of men, and all the duties of angels; *able* to save to the uttermost, all that rely on them, and come unto GOD through them.

Consonant to this, are the sentiments of that penetrating critic and profound scholar, *Dr. Lightfoot*. Who, treating of the same subject says—"Add to all this dignity of his person, who performed this obedience: that he was GOD as well as man: and his obedience is infinite. Such as, in its validity, subdued satan, and in its all-sufficiency satisfied the justice of GOD."—After which, our celebrated author makes this important and delightful improvement; "Think, *Christian*, what a stock of obedience and righteousness here is for thee, to answer and satisfy for thy disobedience and unrighteousness, if thou become a child of the covenant. Here is enough for every soul that comes to him, be they never so many. Like the widow's oil in the book of *Kings*, there is enough and enough again, as long as any vessel is brought to receive it†." So that a sinner, enriched with *CHRIST*'s righteousness, has no need to wish for any thing, cannot possibly obtain any thing, to render him more completely righteous in the sight of GOD.

We do not wonder, that *Gentiles*, who are ignorant of the REDEEMER; that *Jews*, who treat him with contemptuous scorn: that *professors* of religion, who deny his eternal GODHEAD; place little, place no confidence in his righteousness. But it is strange, that *Christians*, who know the SAVIOUR; who acknowledge his divinity; and believe him to be exalted above all blessing and praise—it is exceedingly strange that they do not *rejoice* in him; *make* their *boast* in him; and say, with a becoming disdain, of every other dependence, *get ye hence* ‡!

The obedience of *CHRIST*!—The obedience of him, who walketh in the circuit of the skies §, and all the king-

* *Matt. xxviii. 19.*

† *Lightfoot's works, VOL. II. p. 153.*

‡ *Ish. xxxi. 22.*

§ *Job xxiv. 24.*

doms of the world are reputed as nothing before him!—The obedience of HIM, who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*!—The obedience of HIM, who is Alpha and Omega: the beginning and the ending; which is and which was, and which is to come; the almighty†!—Doubtless, *such* obedience must be deserving, truly deserving, of all that grace and glory, which are, and will be communicated to his people, in every period of time, and through all ages of eternity. Worthy is the lamb that was slain. No wonder, that *such* obedience should justify the ungodly. Should make us poor fallen creatures righteous,—perfectly righteous in the sight of GOD—without the concurrence of any good works, or any holy duties of our own‡.

Such an assemblage of divine perfections, must warrant, must demand, the most unreserved and the most unbounded confidence.—There never was, no, not in all ages, nor in all worlds, any thing greater or richer, *more* dignified or exalted, than the obedience of our LORD.—Nay; it is impossible to imagine, what could be *so* suited to our wants, *so* proper for our reliance, or *so* sure to answer, more than answer all our expectations.

Remember what the apostle affirms, and you will not wonder at my assertion. “In HIM dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.” How comprehensive and exalted is this description! it collects into a point, all the rays of Majesty and honor. It expresses in a sentence, I say not whatever this pen has written, but whatever of dignity and excellence the bible itself contains—The GOD-HEAD, the very nature and essence of the DIETY—The fulness of the GODHEAD; unerring wisdom, almighty power, and whatever the great JEHOVAH challenges as his own. All the fulness; every incommunicable attribute, in the most ample measure, and in the highest degree—all

* Dan. iv 35.

† Rev. i. 8.

‡ May we not, in this sense, understand the words of the LORD, delivered by his prophet? Look unto ME, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am GOD, and there is nothing else. Isai. xlv. 22.

He dwells, not visits occasionally, but stately, invariably, eternally resides—resides in CHRIST JESUS bodily; with an union inconceivably close and intimate. Insomuch that the GODHEAD inhabiting, and the manhood inhabited, make but one and the same marvelous matchless, adorable PERSON.

Therefore, adds the sacred disputant, *ye are complete in HIM**. Never was any conclusion more weighty in itself, or founded on more solid principles. Being united to CHRIST, and interested in CHRIST, ye are filled with all that fulness, which man can receive, or GOD bestow.—He says not, ye shall be; at some distant period, or in some future state. But, ye are; in this present life, and at this very hour. Ye are not only pardoned, but reconciled; and not only reconciled, but accepted as righteous; nay, ye are—and what can be said or desired more?—Ye are COMPLETE. And not barely before men or angels, but before infinite purity and omniscience itself. And this, without the concurrence of your own deeds, only by being partakers of HIM, “who is the head of all principality and “power.” In whom, ye are made, what neither Adam in Paradise could boast, nor angels in heaven can claim, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD.—Amazing, charming truth! what a fountain is this, or rather what a sea of fathomless depth, to obliterate all sins, and supply all wants! what a mirror of stupendous graces and ever to be adored loving kindness!

Here let our meditations fix, and here let all our expectations center. From this, not from any thing of our own let us derive our piece, our joy, our supreme complacency.—Into this subject we can never dive too deeply. O! this subject we can never think too magnificently. The righteousness of CHRIST is the Master-Pillar, on which our present and eternal welfare rests.

*There hangs all human hope: that nail supports
Our falling universe.*

This renders his intercession prevalent. He is an advocate, a successful advocate with the FATHER. Why? because he is JESUS CHRIST the righteous*—From hence results his ability to justify. He shall justify many, saith the LORD JEHOVAH. On what consideration? because he is my *righteous servant*†.—This, and no other, is the meritorious cause of our salvation. *Judah shall be saved*; shall scape damnation, and inherit glory. On what account? On account of the *righteous BRANCH raised up unto David*‡.—Since then our acceptance, justification, and salvation; since our comfort in time, and our happiness to eternity, *all* depend upon the righteousness of CHRIST; how should we delight in contemplating its *faultless*, its *matchless*, its *transcendent* excellency!—Grand! all-sufficient! in every circumstance perfect!—Nothing equal to it, on earth, in heaven, throughout the universe!—Surpassing the multitude of our sins and the enormity of our guilt! surpassing all, that men can express, or angels conceive! being truly, properly, absolutely DIVINE.

And is this righteousness mine? Is this righteousness yours, *Theron*? is this righteousness free for *every* sinner? pleasing, captivating, rapturous thought!—Who can forbear exulting and triumphing, in the boundless blessing! On *such* an occasion, methinks, some sallies of Enthusiasm, or even some starts of tautology, are the language of sensibility, of property, of nature.

Isaiah thought it such an inexhaustible source of joy, as should fill, more than fill the heart of sinners. Should overflow all bounds, and pervade the whole creation. Should ascend to the highest, descend to the lowest, reach the remotest, and affect even the most insensible parts of the universe. Therefore he cries; *sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD, the LORD himself, hath done it.* Out justifying righteousness is finished; finished by JEHOVAH, so-journed in human flesh. *Shout ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains: O forest, and every tree therein, join and augment the general joy. For the*

* 1 Jo. ii. 1.

† Isa. liii. 11.

‡ Jer. xiii. 7. 6.

LORD has, in an infinitely magnificent and infinitely perfect manner, redeemed Jacob; and glorified himself in this most adorable method of recovering Israel *, more than by all his other marvelous works.—O for the tongue of a Seraph!—But even this would be defective: such ardour cold, and such energy languid.

I have done: I add no more: I leave it—to some future letter? to some more laboured essay? No; but to the hymns of heaven, and the adorations of eternity, to supply the deficiency of my acknowledgments.—In the mean time, let me intreat my Theron to contemplate our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, under that gracious and glorious character, described by the prophet, **A PRIEST** upon his **THRONE** †. Dignifying the sacerdotal censor by the regal diadem; adding all the honors of his eternal divinity, to the sacrifice of his bleeding humanity.—Then, I promise myself, you will find it almost impossible, not to adopt the emphatical and ardent protestation of the apostle; **GOD** forbid, that I should glory, that I should confide, save only in the cross of **CHRIST JESUS** my **LORD**; and in the consummate, divine, everlasting righteousness, finished on that bloody tree.

When you made the tour of France and Italy; and, crossing the Alps, gained the summit of some commanding ridge—when you looked round, with astonishment and delight, on the ample plains, which, crowded cities, and adorned with places, extend their beauteous tracts below—when you surveyed the famous rivers, which roll in shining dignity along the fruitful vallies; stating the boundaries of kingdoms, and wafting plenty through the nations—when you shot your transported view to the ocean, whose unmeasurable floods meet the arch of heaven, and terminates the landscape with inconceivable grandeur—did you, then, choose to forego the pleasure resulting from such a prospect, in order to gaze upon the the naked craggs of some adjacent rock? or, could you turn your eyes from those magnificent objects, and fasten them with pleased attention upon a shallow puddle, that lay stagnating at your feet!

You, who have beheld the scene, can accomodate the smile, with peculiar advantage. Only I would claim the liberty of a friend, and once more beg, with a benevolent importunity beg of you, to consider diligently this mysterious righteousness, which is both GOD's and the christian's. GOD's as to its origin and excellency. The christian's as to its use and enjoyment; ignorance of this doctrine, leads into two of the most dangerous mistakes, and pernicious evils—an *unavailing attempt* to establish our own righteousness—and a fatal resolution of not submitting to the righteousness of GOD. Therefore, I cannot forbear transcribing into my paper, what is often breathed in supplication from my lips—

“ O thou GOD of infinite glory! thou GOD of unbounded goodness! thou GOD of immensely rich grace! who hast given thy own adorable SON, to be the atonement for all my sins; to be my righteousness, my portion, and my salvation—to be a better righteousness for me, than the most perfect obedience, performed through ten thousand years—to be a better portion for me, than all the riches in heaven above, and in the earth beneath—to be a more complete salvation for me, than my heart could wish, or my very thoughts imagine—O! give me, give my friend, an enlightened understanding, that we may know HIM that is true, and know him as our own. Give us the inestimable blessing, that we may be in HIM that is true, even in thy SON JESUS CHRIST. For, this SAVIOUR is the true GOD, and thus to know him is eternal life *.”

My Theron needs no argument to convince him, that such a prayer is an act of *rational* and *real* friendship; is the most genuine and substantial proof, that I am

His truly Affectionate

ASPASIO.



LETTER IX.

THERON TO ASPASIO.

DEAR ASPASIO,

YOUR two letters have reached my hand; and I hope, they have not missed my heart. I might inform you, what pleasure they gave me, and how highly I esteem them. But you desire no such compliments. You desire to see me impressed with the sentiments, and living under their influence. This would be the most acceptable acknowledgment to my Aspasio, because it would be the most happy effect to his Theron. May every day, therefore, bring a fresh accession of such gratitude to me, and of *such* satisfaction to you.

To watch for my soul, and pray for my salvation, I am thoroughly convinced, is the truest instance of rational and exalted friendship. Every claim to that amiable character, is defective and *vain*, if it does not extend to our spiritual interests, and our everlasting welfare. For which reason, I need not intreat *you* to continue and perpetuate this best exercise of social kindness. Or if I do, it is rather to testify how much I prize the favour, than to prompt your affectionate and ready mind.

Your last found me at a friend's house, which lies pretty near the western ocean.—Yesterday, waked by the lark, and rising with the dawn, I strolled into the fragrant air, and

dewy fields. While, as Shakespear with his usual sprightliness expresses himself,

—Jocund day

Stood tip-toe on the misty mountain's top.

Sweet was the breath of morn, and sweet the exhalations of the freshened flowers—grateful were the soft salutes of the cooling zephyrs, attended with the charm of earliest birds—delightful the sun, painting with its orient beams the chambers of the firmament, and unveiling the face of universal nature.

My mind, but little effected with these inferior entertainments. was contemplating an object of infinitely superior dignity. Contemplating that adorable BEING, who raised—from nothing raised this stupendous system of things; and supports—with his word, supports the magnificent frame. Who (to speak in the language of his own SPIRIT) *openeth the eyelids of the morning, and commandeth the day-spring to know its place* *. Commandeth the light by its punctual and pleasing ministrations, to draw aside the curtain of darkness; and discover the skies, shining with glories; and disclose the earth, blooming with beauties.

FATHER of light and life, said my transported mind,

—Thou GOOD SUPREME !

O teach me what is good ! Teach me THYSELF.

Save me from Folly, Vanity and Vice,

From every low Pursuit ! and feed my Soul

With Faith, with conscious Peace and Virtue pure,

Sacred, substantial, never-fading Bliss †.

Wrapt in wonder, and lost in thought, I rambled carelessly along till I was insensibly brought to the shore. Which in these parts, is prodigiously high and strong : perfectly well

* Job xxxviii. 22.

† Thomson's Winter.

fitted, to stand as an everlasting barrier *, against the impetuous stroke of conflicting winds, and the ponderous sweep of dashing surges.—Not that the omnipotent ENGINEER has any need of these impregnable ramparts. Here, it is true they intervene ; and not only repress the railing invader, but speak the supreme uncontrollable power of their MAKER.—In other places, all such laboured methods of fortification are laid aside. The CREATOR shews the astonished world, that he is confined to no expedients ; but orders all things, according to the pleasure of his own will. He bids a low bank of despicable sand, sustain the shock, and curb the rage of furious assaulting seas. *Though the waves thereof toss themselves, with incredible fierceness yet can they not prevail ; though they roar, and seem to menace universal destruction, yet can they pass over † this slightest of mounds.*

A winding passage broke the declivity of the descent ; and led me, by a gradual slope, to the bottom.—The moon being in her last quarter, and the tide at its greatest recess I walked for a while, where briny waves were wont to flow.—The ebbing waters had left a vacant space, several furlongs broad ; equal in length to a very extended vista, smooth on its surface, as the most level bowling-green ; and almost as firm, as the best compacted causey. Inso-much, that the tread of a horse scarce impresses it, and the waters of the sea never penetrate it.—Exclusive of this wise contrivance, the searching waves would insinuate themselves into the heart of the earth. The earth itself would be hollow as an honey-comb, or bibulous as a sponge. And the sea, soaking by degrees through all its cavities, would in process of time, forsake its bed, and mingle with the plains and mountains. But this closely cemented or glutinous kind of pavement, is like *claying* the bottom of the universal canal, so that the returning tides consolidate rather than perforate its substance. By keeping it perpetually moist, they prevent the sun from cleaving it with chinks.—Such I hope, will be the case, with this soul of

mine, and the temptations that beset me. Beset me they do, they will. But may they never win upon my affections, nor again admittance into my heart; Let them make me humble, and keep me vigilant; teach me to talk closely with my GOD, and urge me to an incessant dependence on CHRIST. Then, instead of being ruinous, they may become advantageous; and instead of shattering, will only cleanse the rock, on which they dash.

The mighty waters, restless even in their utmost tranquillity, with a solemn but placid murmur, struck my ear. The billows, sometimes advancing to kiss the sand; sometimes drawing back their curly heads into the deep; whitened, at their extremities, into an agreeable foam. Which the reflective representation of the azure canopy, formed the appearance of a majestic floating mantle; tinged with a beautiful blue, and edged with fringes of silver. —Dignity and elegance, I find, are the inseparable characteristics of the CREATOR's workmanship. As comfort and happiness, I sometimes perceive, are the very spirit of his gospel, and the genuine produce of his commands.

How numerous are these sands! bid an accomptant take the number of them. His imagination recoils at the very thought. "Number them! no; not the millionth part, even in a thousand years. Or should time and ability suffice, figures would fail, and words be insufficient."—Nothing in the whole round of creation, can suggest a finer image, to represent the greatest multitude. It brings to my mind one of the most picturesque and beautiful passages, which I have met with in any language. The passage oc-

ed, if I may so speak, the *Israelitish Camp*. "Rained" flesh upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as "the sand of the sea.—Rained", is a very bold metaphor; admirably expressive of copiousness—as dust; which in some parched season, and near some populous city, covers and overwhelms the public road—*like the sand of the sea*; is an advance upon the preceding comparison, and displays the miraculous supply in a more striking light. Methinks,

I see the feathery legions, lying heaps upon heaps; closely wedged, in vast extent, and proportionable depth. Resembling those beds of sand, which the ever working surges have, for years and ages, been throwing up, on the confines of the ocean.

The sand of the sea! One would imagine, this comparison was emphatical enough, to denote any multitude. But in one instance, it is incompetent; it falls short. In denoting the profuse liberality of JEHOVAH to his unworthy creatures. Consider the multiplicity of conveniencies, comforts, delights, which he has commanded every element to afford us. Consider the various blessings which his sparing, delivering, protecting providence has vouchsafed us. Consider those better, far better things, which the gospel of his grace offers to us, in this world; and which his infinite goodness has prepared for us, in an other world. Consider all this, and we may truly say, he poureth his benefits around us: he heapeth his mercies upon us; yea, his mercies and his benefits, *are MORE in number than the sand.*

The sand, in another view, excites the idea of great extent, or large capacity. Those waters are wide, but this border of encircling gravel is wider still. It may be called the rim of the vessel, which contains the unmeasurable waves. Are any arms extended to such a length, as those which stretch themselves quite round the world of waters? within whose ample circumference, the surges of the atlantic and pacific, the billows of the northern and the southern ocean, find room to spread, and swell, and roll at large? once again let me admire the uncommon boldness, and exquisite propriety of the scriptural comparisons. They set forth the wisdom of Solomon, by this most apposite and magnificent image. *GOD gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much; and largeness of heart, extensive and capacious, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore.*

A single glance on his accomplishments will evince the truth of this character.—As a moralist, *he spake three thousand proverbs*; weighty with sense, concisely worded, and of excellent use in the conduct of life.—As a poet, *his songs were a thousand and five*; embellished (if we may

judge from the specimen, that is come down to our hands) with the richest imagery, animated with the tenderest affection, and ennobled with the most refined sentiments.—As a philosopher, he had an extraordinary insight into the mysteries of nature. For he made observations on the animals, which inhabit every element; their natures, their qualities, their uses. He spake also of “trees, from the Cedar-Tree, that is in Lebanon, even to the Hyssop, that springeth out of the wall.”—Yea; so unconfined was the compass of his intellectual abilities, that “he gave his heart to seek and to search concerning all things, that are done under the sun.” With such success did he prosecute his inquiries, that *there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon*. Studious persons, from all the neighbouring nations, resorted to his court; that they might learn from this consummate scholar, and kindle their tapers at his lamp. What added unspeakable lustre to these distinguished endowments, they were so many handmaids to the great mistress of all, divine grace. He taught both subjects and foreigners, to “fear GOD and keep his commandments.” Making all his lectures subservient and conductive to true religion.

Was ever mind so wonderfully enlarged, and so richly furnished? yet, when he comes to cast up the reckoning, to acquaint us with the sum total of his acquirements, he places this humbling acknowledgement, at the foot of the account; “that which is wanting, cannot be numbered.” Much I have searched; much I have found; but that which is wanting, that which is still to be discovered, is incomparably more. The objects of science are an unbounded abyss. I have only skimmed the surface, and coasted the shores. What remains to be explored, in those vast spaces, which lie between the range of a finite mind, and the perfections of the infinite GOD; this surpasses the power of language to tell, or of arithmetic to count. It cannot be numbered.—Admirable man! I know not which are most conspicuous, the humility and modesty of his sentiments; the very superior strength of his faculties, and the vast compass of his knowledge; or the noble similitude, by which the latter are displayed.

On one side, the *atlantic* main rolled its surges from world to world.—*Imense, imense* diffusion of waters! what

a spectacle of magnificence ! what an irresistible incitement to reverence and awe ; how it fills the mind, and amazes the imagination ! it is the grandest and most august object under the whole heavens. It reminds me of that apocalyptic vision, which John the inraptured seer, beheld “ As it “ were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into “ the sea, and the third part of the sea become blood ; and “ the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, that “ had life, died ; and the third part of the ships were des- “ troyed*.” I have not penetration enough, to discover the spiritual meaning of this passage ; but, I discern a most dreadful grandeur, in its plain and literal sense.—If we consider the wonderful compass, and the terrible force of such an enormous mass of fire ; if we consider its horrible and destructive effects, on such a vast body of waters, as the third part of the ocean ; how tremendous and astonishing is the idea ! surely, nothing but divine inspiration could suggest these images ; as nothing but an almighty arm can execute this vengeance. Who would not fear an eternal KING, that has such weapons and such artillery, reserved against the day of battle and war†.

Spacious as the sea is, GOD has provided a garment, to cover it. Profound as the sea is, GOD has prepared swaddling bands, to inwrap it. Ungovernable as it may be seem to us, he over-rules it with as much as ease, as the nurse manages a new-born Infant ‡. An infant it is before almighty power ; and to an infant it is compared, by JEHOVAH himself ; though, to our apprehension, it raves like a stupendous madman.—Tossing mighty fleets, with their thousands and millions of tons, like a tennis-ball ; and shattering them with their ribs of oak and iron, like an egg-shell.

Yet if GOD commands, this outrageous element opens a peaceful bosom, and receives his people. It smooths the way for their passage, and stands as bulwarks for their defence. They march through the midst of the sea upon dry

Rev, vii. 8. 9 † Job, xxxviii. 22.

‡ Job, xxxviii. 8. 9.

ground, and the waters, in hanging heaps, or rather in fluid mountains, *are a wall unto them on their right-hand on their left* * —If he reserves his mandate, they drive down, with an irresistible sweep, upon the hosts of *Pharaoh*; and overwhelm the chariots and horses of *Egypt*. They pour confusion upon arrogance, and disappoint the designs of persecution and cruelty.—If he says *be still*! the bellowing surges are hushed; and the gentlest lamb is not quiet. If he says *destroy*, even the quiescent waters kindle into rage; they rise in their MAKER's cause; and ten thousand lions, stung with hunger, and rushing upon their prey, are not so fierce. When he bids them execute any other commission; the horse broke to the bit, the spaniel disciplined to the signal, are not half so duitful and obsequious. Shall our passions be more wild and headstrong than the winds; more turbulent and ungovernable than the billows? For bid it, Almighty LORD! thou that *rulest the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves*; restrain subdue, and calm the madness of the people.

The eye travels hard. It wanders a vast length, and vast breadth of fluctuating plains. It reaches the limits of the horizon, where skies and waves seem to mingle. Yet it has scarce made an entry upon the world of waters.—Was I placed on the summit of atlas, or I could take a survey from the peak of Teneriffe, even in this commanding situation, I should discern no more, than the skirts of the great and wide sea. Tracts of amazing magnitude, swell and float all around; yet tracts incomparably broader, are still behind and tracts of unbounded extent, are behind even those,

Great then, O my soul, inconceivably great, must that adored and glorious SOVEREIGN be, who sitteth upon this flood; and the world of waters, is but as the footstool to his throne†. Nay; who holds the mighty waves, diffused as they are, from pole to pole, in the hollow of his hand; and before whom, in all their prodigious dimensions, they are but as the drop of a bucket.—How shall reptiles

of the ground sink low enough in their own apprehensions ! What humiliation can be sufficiently deep for sinful mortals, before this " High and Holy One ! " Yet how may they rise on the wings of hope ! How may they soar on the pinions of faith ! When in the language of the Prophet, and in his own SON's name, they thus address the everlasting GOD. *Awake ! awake ! Put on strength, O arm of the LORD ! Awake, for our succour and security, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it, that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon ? Art thou not it, which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep ? Thou hath made the depths of the sea, a way for the ransomed to pass over ? **

How grand, surprisingly grand and majestic, are the works, as well as the attributes of an omnipotent BEING ! What are all the canals in all the kingdoms of the earth, compared with this immense reservoir ? What are all the superb edifices, erected by royal munificence, compared with yonder cave of the skies ! and what are the most common illuminations of theatres and triumphant cities, compared with the resplendent source of day ! They are a spark, and atom, a drop,—Nay, in every spark, and atom, and drop, which proceeds from the hand of the ALMIGHTY, there is the manifestation of a wisdom and a power absolutely incomprehehsible.

Let us examine a single drop of water, the very least quantity, which the eye can discern ; only so much as will just adhere to the point of a needle. In this almost imperceptible speck, a famous philosopher computes no less than thirteen thousand globules. Amazing to conceive ! Impossible to explicate !—If then in so small a speck, abundantly more than ten thousand globules exist, what myriads of anyriads must float in the unmeasurable extent of the ocean ! Let the ablest arithmetician try to comprehend in his mind, not the internal constitution, but only the numbers of these fluid particles. As well may he grasp the winds in his fist,

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or mete the universe with his span, as to execute the task. —If then we are utterly unable to number (which is the *most superficial of all researches*) even the *most common* works of the great JEHOVAH; how can we pretend to lay open the secrets, and penetrate the recesses of his infinite mind! how can we pretend to investigate the whole process, and solve all the difficulties, of that highest and deepest of the divine schemes, REDEMPTION.

I have sometimes been offended, I must confess, Aspasio when you have enlarged upon the mysterioustruths of christianity. And I have often been surprised, to observe, in our LORD's character, the joint appearance of human weakness and heavenly majesty. To see him encompassed with every bodily want, and every innocent infirmity; yet claiming every divine perfection, every attribute of that peerless ONE, who shares not his glory with another.—But I perceive, the beam was in mine own eye, when I fancied the mote was in my friend's. The mist was not on the scriptures, but darkness on my own apprehensions.

Is there, in every ray of light, and every particle of matter, a depth of contrivance unfathomable by the line of any human understanding? And shall there be nothing abstruse or profound, nothing but what is level to our scanty apprehensions, in the great * things of GOD's law, and the glorious † things of his gospel? To expect this, is just as wise in itself, and just as congruous to nature, as to expect—a sea, whose cavities might have been digged by our spade—a sky, whose arches are unmeasurable by our compasses—a sun, whose orb may be included in our lanthorns.

When therefore I read of ONE uncreated and eternal BEING, subsisting in THREE divine PERSONS; when I hear of an infinitely pure and perfect GOD, made flesh for the redemption of sinful men; when I meditate on the righteous and universal JUDGE, reconciling the world unto himself, by the death of his own SON;—when a thousand curious and inquisitive thoughts are ready to arise on the occasion; I will bid them first sound the depths of a

single drop, and then apply their plummet to the boundless ocean. This I am very sure, is not weak credulity, nor wild enthusiasm ; but the maturest dictate of reason, and the very precision.—Let then the great CREATOR make that sublime declaration ; “ As the heavens are higher than “ the earth, so are my ways, than your ways ; and my “ thoughts than your thoughts *.” Let every human creature add that humble acknowledgement : “ O the depths of “ the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD ! “ How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past “ finding out † !” And not devotion only, but reason an truth, and will say Amen to both.

You say, Aspasio, how I am trying to adopt your spirit. You will observe the willing scholar, though not the great proficient.—But stay ! Is this right ! To divert from such commanding subjects, and take notice of mere punctilios ? —My friend may spare his frowns. I am surprised and am angry at myself. Away with the little arts of self-recommendation. Self should be forgot, should be swallowed up and lost in devout astonishment, when we are viewing the magnificence, and meditating on the wonders of creation.

Behind me, and far off to the North, Cambria's dusky coasts just, and but just emerged. Lost were all her woods and mountains. Instead of ornamented towns, and cultivated plains, a confused mist, or a low-hung cloud, seemed to hover on the ocean's remotest brim.—Behind me ! remembrance is roused at the expression, and conscience sharpens her sting. Ah ! how often and how long, have I treated in this very manner, the noblest senses, and the sublimest joys ! Have turned my back—ungrateful and besotted creature !—upon the heavenly country, and wandered from the regions of infinite delight ! Therefore they now appear dim. I have scarcely a glimpse of their transcendent excellencies. Or if I see by faith, it is with frequent intermissions, and much obscurity.

* Isa. lv. 9.

† Rom. xi. 33.

Turn me, O thou GOD of my salvation, turn me from pursuing phantoms, and attach me to thy blessed self. Let me henceforth steer an invariable course to IMMANUEL's kingdom, May its treasures, as I advance, open to my view, and its glories brighten in my eye. O! may some odours, better, far better, than *Sabæan* spicy odours*, exhale from the delectable hills, and the celestial shores!—But chiefly thou eternal SPIRIT breathe upon my soul, both by thy *convincing* and *comforting* influences! nor ever cease to swell my sails, and speed my progress; till I arrive at the land, that is very far off. That happy land, where I shall see the KING, the KING of grace and of glory, in all his transcendent and ineffable beauty †.

On my left-hand, stood a range of *mountainous cliffs*. They arose not sloping, but in a perpendicular direction, Rocks piled on rocks! Huge; black; horrid; Frowning over the flood, and extending themselves, as far as the eye could reach. Here, bending inwards to the land; there, bellying out into the deep; every where projecting a shade several leagues a-cross the ocean.

The height of these cliffs so formidable, that every human creature who comes near the summit, starts back *terrified* and *aghast*. Only a few stragling goats venture to graze on the top; and these to a person walking below, appear but as specks of moving white. While the seamews, that winnow the air about the middle steep, look like winged animuncules, pursuing their little sports in a different region.—The aspect of these cliffs so wild and horrid, it is impossible to behold them without a shivering dread. The spectator is apt to imagine, that nature had formerly suffered some violent convulsions, or been shat-

* Alluding to those lines in MILTON.

—As when to them who sail
Beyond the cape of hope, and now are past
Mofambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odour, from the spicy shore
Of Afaby the blest, and many a league
Chear'd with the grateful smell old ocean smiles.

Book IV. 159.

† *Ibid.* xxxiii. 17.

tered by the flaming bolts ; and that these are the dismembered remains of the dreadful stroke. The ruins, not of *Persepolis* or *Polmyra*, but of the world !

Amazing ! What adventurous daring creature is yonder, gathering samphire from the cavities of the rock ! He has let himself down several fathoms beneath the black and dizzy summit,—gleans a poor livelihood, from the edges of danger, shall I say ? Rather from the *jaws* of death. I can, not discover the rope, to which he clings. He seems to be suspended over the tremendous precipice, by a thread, by a hair, by nothing.—I'll look no longer. The very sight chills my veins. While I view his perilous elevation ; I can think of nothing but a headlong downfall, and fractured bones ; of brains left to reek on the pointed crags, and streaming on the discoloured beach.

Suppose (if the mind can bear so shocking a supposition) some poor wretch, *exposed* on the brow of this stupendous promontory ; without any support of his feet ; and cleaving only to a weak slender shrub, which but just adheres to the crevices of the rock. What tumultuous throbbings seize his breast ? What a dying paleness invades his cheeks ? What agonies of fear rend his heart ? As he hangs, *projecting* over the ragged precipice ; and surveys the ocean deep, wondrous deep below !—The bough gives way. His only hope fails. It yields more and more to his weight. Good heavens *He sinks ! He sinks !* O ! for some friendly hand, to snatch him from perishing ; millions millions of gold, were the cheap purchase of such a mercy.

There was a time, my soul when thou wast in a situation, equally shall I say ? Incomparably more dangerous. Tottering, not only on the verge of life, but on the very brink of hell. Often remember thy peril. Often review the formidable scene. Stand in silent recollection, upon the edges of the precipice, to which sickness led thee ; on which death pursued thee ; and from which both were confederated to cast thee headlong.—Look down into the yawning gulph, and the bottomless abyss. See the infernal prison, and the sinners that are gone to their own place. Hear them weeping and wailing, the gnashing of their teeth, and their inconsolable anguish. Observe the chains of

darkness; the devouring flame, and the everlasting burnings. Couldst thou have dwelt in that lake of fire and brimstone? Couldst thou have taken up thy abode amidst those hellish fiends? Couldst thou have lingered out eternal ages, in that insupportable and inconceivable woe?—Bless then adore and bless the compassionate arm, which was stretched out, in the very article of need, rescue thee from this great, approaching, endless perdition. Never, never forget that gracious voice, which said—in accents sweeter than the music of the seraphic choir—“deliver him from going down” into the pit. Let his health be restored, and his day of “grace be prolonged.”

In some places, the hideous ruins not only tower to the skies, but lean over the strand. Prominent and frightfully pendulous, they nod horror, and threaten destruction on all below. A person congratulates himself, when he has got clear of the bending precipice; and can hardly forbear thinking, that the enormous load is withheld by some unseen hand, till the execrable wretch, doomed to a most astonishing vengeance, is come within reach of the blow. And truly, if he had the strength of the elephant, or the firmness of the Behemoth, this must grind him to powder, or even crush into atoms.

How awful to consider! that there is a day coming, when wicked potentates, and haughty monarchs, will beg of yonder seas, to yawn compassionately deep, and hide them in their darkest abysses; hide them from the piercing eye, and avenging sword, of inflexible justice.—That there is a coming, when the soft voluptuary, the wanton beauty, and all the ungodly of the earth, will beseech those tremendous ridges with their unsupportable burden of rocks, to rush down upon their guilty heads*. If, by this means, they may be screened from the infinitely more dreaded weight of divine indignation.

Vain are their cries; and vainer still would be their refuge, should their passionate requests be granted. Can floods conceal the impious wretches; when the abysses of

the ocean shall be laid bare, and the foundations of the world be discovered? when the caverns of the earth, and the bottoms of the mountains, shall be visible as the naked plain?—Can rocks *secrete* an obnoxious rebel; when rocks, with all their marble quarries, and adamantine entrails, shall dissolve like melting wax? when hills, that plunge their roots to the center, and lose their towering heads in air, shall start from their affrighted base, and flee away like chaff before the wind?—Good GOD! What racking anguish must they *feel*! what inexpressibly severer torment must they *fear*! who can implore, ardently implore as a most desirable favour, what imagination itself shudders to conceive.

In some places, these mountainous declivities lift their brow aloft; plant their basis deep; and, instead of portending a fall, defy the fury of the most impetuous elements. Firmly consolidated, and stedfastly established, they have withstood the united, the repeated assaults of winds and waves, through a long series of revolving ages.—The sacred writers, I observe, select almost all the striking images, which the whole creation affords; in order to communicate their heavenly ideas, with the greatest advantage. Isaiah describing the security of the righteous, takes his comparison from the grand spectacle before my eyes. “He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks*”; inaccessible as those lofty ridges, immoveable as their everlasting foundations.

Should it be asked, what these munitions of rocks may signify?—I would find two places of refuge and safeguard, pointed out in scripture; to either of which, I believe, the metaphor is applicable. *He had horns of his hand: there was the hiding of his power*†. Uncontroulable and omnipotent power was lodged in the great JEHOVAH’s hand; and this was the sure defence, this the impregnable garrison, for all his people.—The church of CHRIST is said to be in the clefts of the rock‡: that spiritual rock, of which

Isai. xxxiii. 16.

† Habak. iii. 4.

‡ Cant. ii. 14.

the *Israelites* drank in the Wilderness; venerable and precious clefts were opened, when the bloody spear tore up the REDEEMER's side, and cut a wide and deadly passage to his heart. Surely, the *inhabitants of this rock* have reason to sing*. What should disquiet them? Who can destroy them? Why should not the voice of joy be in their dwellings, and that hymn of holy triumph in their mouths? We have a strong city: Salvation hath GOD appointed, salvation itself, for walls and bulwarks†.—Happy should I think myself, if I was interested in this SAVIOUR, and established on this rock.

Yonder on the summit of the most conspicuous cliff, is erected a grand and stately pile. At the top, my glass discovers a superb lanthorn; at the foot are the huts of fishermen, surrounded with various sorts of nets.—It is, I suppose a Light-house. Intended to apprise the sailor, of his danger; and shew him, where the shelves lurk, and where the whirlpool boils. Or else to point out the course he should steer; and conduct him into a safe road, and secure harbour.

Both the situation, and design of the building read me a lesson: the one of awful admonition, the other, of comfortable instruction.—Comfortable instruction. How massy and ponderous is the edifice! yet, there is not the least reason to be apprehensive, of failure or insufficiency, in the foundation. Was the structure ten thousand times larger; was its weight ten thousand times greater; the solid rock would support it, with the utmost ease, and the utmost steadiness. Such is CHRIST; such are his merits; such his glorious righteousness, to those wise and blessed souls, who rest all the weight of their eternal interests on him alone. Such, did I say? much surer. For the mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed‡; but this divine basis can never sink, can never be shaken.—Awful admonition. For, it recalls to my memory that alarming, yet welcome text§, which you styled the spiritual light-

* Isai. xliii. 11.

† Isai. xxvi. 1.

‡ Isai. liv. 10.

§ See Rom. i. xi. 20, 21, 22.

house. Which has been as serviceable, to my distressed mind, and bewildered thoughts; as such an illuminated watch-tower, to the wandering and benighted mariner. May I often view it! ever attend to its faithful direction! and be with-held, by its interposition, from that devouring gulph, and that destructive shoal, dependence on self-righteousness. Be led, by its influence, into the Haven—the fair and happy Haven of salvation and grace.

Now I have mentioned havens, I cannot but admire the state and disposition of the shore. I see even in its rude and shapeless form, a most pleasing display of divine goodwill to men.—In arranging this vast assemblage of earth and water, the ALMIGHTY disposer has kept a continual eye upon our benefit. Were the shores straight, like the walls of our garden; or smooth, like some polished globe; they might seem more orderly and graceful. But how detrimental such a piece of delicacy, to navigation, to commerce, and the prosperity of human affairs! Our ships, in stormy weather, would be like stragling parties of vanquished and flying troops; pursued by an enraged enemy, and shut out from every fortress, every place of refuge.

This GOD's infinite wisdom foresaw, and his infinite goodness determined to prevent. For which purpose, he made the boundaries of the great deep, not even and shapelessly, but most advantageously ragged and irregular.—Here, the earth is scooped and excavated, for many miles; as if it had been bored, by some prodigiously large auger.—There it sinks, and turns, and winds, somewhat like the wards of a lock; giving easy admission to our ships and fleets, but barring the access of furious and destructive surges.—Yonder, two huge promontories, horrible to behold advance, as it were with haughty strides, into the deep. They frown over abyss but look, with the most smiling aspect, on the weather-beaten bark. Amidst the arms of these frightful, but friendly cliffs, the sailor and his vessel find shelter, repose, and safety.—In one or other of these various harbours, they drop their fear, as they drop their anchor; and defy the rage of tempests, and care not for all the madness of the ocean.

How many thousands and millions of lives, has this kind provisional safeguard, rescued from destruction! Without these most commodious receptacles the sea would be covered with wrecks; and the waves be little better, than a grave to the mariners. Bnt, putting into some hospitable port, they are beyond the reach of danger. Though howling winds rend the sky, and fiercest hurricanes toss the sea, they abide in perfect security. Thus they abide, till the storm is hushed; till the billows subside; and a calm takes place.

Such, methinks, is the state, the happy state of the righteous. Who can say, in faith and in truth, the eternal GOD is our refuge. What haven can be so safe, as his omnipotent protection? As the arm of his power, and the wings of his providence? In the midst of perils, their persons are secure. Surrounded by enemies, their persons are undis-mayed. Even when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place; thy people O LORD, shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in quiet resting-places*.

Let me but once again survey those rude bnt majestic elevations, those wild but noble deformities, the cliffs.—Fortifications, reared by an Almighty hand, to protect us at once from warring elements, and invading enemies.—Ramparts, which overlook and command the ocean; and viewed by distant mariners, seem to touch or prop the sky. Which have surrounded our isle ever since the universal deluge, and will be her never failing defence even to the general conflagration.—If some opiniated engineer should take it in his head, to suspect the stability of those unshaken bulwarks: if he should make proposals for strengthening them with buttresses, or girding them round with cramping irons! How would his project be received? With approbation and applause? Or with the sneer of contempt, and the hiss of indignation? “Fool that he is! To think of enlarging and corroborating these magnificent and everlasting works of nature, by the puny piddlings of art!”—

Such, so foolish and preposterous, is that once favourite conceit, of adding my own performances, in order to increase the justifying efficacy of CHRIST's obedience. What a disparagement this to the great the divine foundation ! Which for the support of burdened, and the security of indangered sinners, is sufficient—is self-sufficient—is all sufficient.

Hark ! Whence is that shrill noise ? It is what Milton calls, the sea-mew's clang. I look round and find her by her voice. How she plays on the breeze, and sports on the surge ! Free as the first, unconfined as the last. Sometimes I see her sweeping the lofty cliffs, or skimming the level deep. Sometimes I behold her springing in the air, and soaring far above the summit of the Admiral's mast. Anon she shoots as low into the heart of the ocean, loses our sight and seems lost to the world. On a sudden, the feathery diver emerges ; shakes the brine on her wings ; rises on those strong pinions ; and with a triumphant scream, flits along the shores, or sails through the skies.

How wonderfully has PROVIDENCE fitted this and some other animals, to sojourn in either element ? Be they in the moist or dry, in the dense or rare, in the buoyant atmosphere or the overwhelming flood, it is all alike to them. They are citizens of either region ; and are presented, if I may so speak, with the freedom both of sea and land.—Is not this a significant emblem of that happy temper described by St. Paul, and exemplified in his conduct. “ I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. “ I know both how to be abased, and I know how to “ abound. Every where, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and “ to suffer need *.

Now we behold him in prosperity. He rides upon the high places of the earth, with sun shine all around him.—He is received as *CHRIST JESUS*, and respected as an angel of GOD. People are willing to pluck out their own eyes, and give them to him.—Ere long the scene shifts,

and we behold him in adversity. He is smitten into the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. His own familiar friends forsake him. His enemies come about him like exasperated bees. And the general cry is, "away with such a fellow from the earth."—Yet what equanimity is preserved amidst these startling revolutions! like the *Caspian* sea, which neither ebbs nor flows, he is still the same: the same humble, zealous, heavenly-minded christian. Unchanged by vicissitude, he stoops with dignity, or ascends with ease. Alacrity in his business, and complacency in his condition, are his inseparable attendants. *In all things approving himself the minister of GOD, and the friend of man.*—But let us hear his own words. They are inimitably beautiful. I never read, in any author, a greater sublimity of sentiment; and I never observed, in any description, a more genuine magnificence of spirit.

As amphibious animals live and move, either in air or water; so says the apostle, we pass unhurt and unaffected, *through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report. As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things**. What a noble superiority to all external circumstances.—This is liberty indeed. He is more than conqueror over every wrong and over all tribulation. This is the exalted character. This the truly *great man*.

How changeable is the face of this liquid element! not long ago, there was nothing, from this stony boundary, to the horizon's utmost verge, but the wildest tumult and most horrible confusion. Now the stormy flood has smoothed its rugged brow, and the watery uprore is lulled into a profound tranquility. Where rolling mountains rushed and raged, threatening to dash the clouds, and deluge the earth; there the gentlest undulations play, and only just wrinkle the surface of the mighty bason. Where the dreadful abyss opened its wide and unfathomable jaws, to swallow

up the trembling sailor, and his shattered vessel; there a calm and clear expanse diffuses its ample bosom, alluring the fish to bask in the sun, and inviting the sea-fowl to watch for their prey.

In this fair floating mirror, I see the picture of every cloud, which passes through the regions of the sky. But in its uncertain and treacherous temperature, I see more plainly the inconstant and ever variable condition of human affairs.—Yonder go the ships. Some associated, like constellations in the expanse of heaven. Some solitary, like planets on the etherial road. Two or three are perfectly distinguishable. Their sails are all expanded. They swell to the breeze, and catch the rambling gales. Their keel ploughs the wave, and their hull shaves the level deep.—The mariners, delighted with these peaceful seas, and this serene, soothing state of things, have, perhaps no apprehensions of danger. They think not of the irresistible storms, which may gather around them; nor of the shipwrecked dead, that lie buried beneath them. I wish them a prosperous voyage. Yet, sincerely as I wish it, I durst not undertake to insure it. Soon may clouds darken the scene, and lightnings glare amidst the gloom. Soon may the winds howl, and the tempest rave. Nor man, nor angel, can ascertain the continuence of this halcyon weather, much as a single day, or even to the next hour.—And let me not fondly promise myself an uninterrupted tenor of serenity in my mind, or of prosperity in my circumstances. Sometimes, indeed, my heart exults under the smile of heaven, and the favour of GOD. But soon; ah! too soon I am clouded with fear, and oppressed with corruption. I sigh out that passionate acknowledgement, wretched man that I am! and add that wishful inquiry, who shall deliver me?—For this disordered state of things, the afflicted patriarch's complaint, is the most apposite motto, and the most wholesome memento; changes and war are around me. But there is a world, where disastrous revolutions will be known no more. Where our enjoyments will no

longer fluctuate like the ocean, but be more steadfast than the rocks, and more immoveable than the shores.

In this world, we are never secure. Calamity comes like a thief in the night ; at a hour when we are not aware ; and from a quarter, which we did not suspect. Out of such a composed sea, which is the very image of tranquility, sometimes destruction rises. And rises in its most dreadful form. —A prodigious detatchment of water issues from the deep ; and, by some unknown but wondrous force, advances in the upper regions. It spreads amidst the clouds, or becomes itself a black and horrid cloud. The sea boils, as the whirling column ascends ; and the air roars, as it receives the unusual weight. Laden with ruin, and big with death, the tremendous meteor lours. It hovers for a while on the groaning atmosphere ; as tho' it was singling out its prey, or taking the surest aim. Then bursts—in a moment bursts, and with irresistible impetuosity falls. The rock, torn from the summit of a mountain, and thundering down the cliffs, plunges not into the foaming brine, with half the fury or half the noise. The very ocean is startled at the shock *.—But if a ship, an unfortunate ship, happens to be within the reach of this precipitated deluge, alas ! no strength of timber can sustain, no art of sailors can elude the blow. All is lost. The vessels is dashed into shivers, or sinks like lead in the mighty waters.—So, only ten thousand times deeper, must sinful men have sunk ; sunk, under the wrath of GOD and the curse of the law, had not our gracious REDEEMER bore the burden of both, in his own body on the tree.

Here, I see an immense collection of waters, in a state of deep repose. Could I extend my view to some remoter tracts, I should behold every thing smoother and calmer still.

* We have a very remarkable and terrible account of a water-spout, recorded in the Philosophical transactions.—“ A spout (Anno 1718.) breaking on Emott-moor, near Coln in Lancashire, the country was immediately overflowed ; a brook, in a few minutes, rose six feet perpendicularly high ; the ground, whereon the spout fell, which was sixty feet over, was torn up to the very rock, which was no less than seven feet deep ; and a deep gulp made for above half a mile, the earth being raised on either side in great heaps.”—What were the stoutest ship beneath such a load of falling waters ? Like an Egg-shell under the weight of a Pyramid.

It frequently happens, on the eastern coasts of *Africa*, that not a ridge swells, nor a furrow sinks, the surface of the ocean. 'Tis all like a glassy plain. The waves are asleep. Not a gale stirs. Even the downy feather, hung on the cordage, is motionless. The sea stagnates. The mariner is *becalmed*; and his vessel reels, but scarcely creeps.—Whereas, could I survey the straits of *Magellan*, or the gut of *Gibraltar*, I should find a very striking difference. There, the waters pour with vehemence, and rush forwards with impetuosity. All is there in strong agitation, and rapid progress. The ship is whirled through the narrow passage; and rides, as it were, on the wheels of the surge, or on the wings of the wind.—This, my dear *Aspasio*, is a true image of what I have been, and of what I am. Some months ago, when I was insensible of guilt, all my prayers were listless, and all my religion was a kind of spiritual lethargy. I felt not in my heart what I uttered with my tongue. *Hosannahs* were but an empty ceremony, and confessions froze on my formal lips.—But, since the SPIRIT of GOD has awakened me from my dream, and convinced me of sinfulness, I cannot no longer be satisfied with indolent and yawning devotions, trials and temptations put strong cries into my mouth. My soul mourns before my LORD: my desires plead with the blessed GOD: and I am ready to say, as the patriarch of old, “I cannot, ‘I must not, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me *.”

I see no flocks of sheep, with sober assiduity, nibbling the grassy plains. No lambs, with innocent gaiety, and in little parties on pleasure, frisking along the sunny banks. Here are no stables for the generous steed, nor pastures for the lusty heifer. Nevertheless, these watery regions are stocked with colonies of proper and peculiar inhabitants.

Inhabitants! Is such a thing possible? Can any creature live in this suffocating element? Can they move and act, propagate their species, and continue from generation to generation; were we, if immersed but a few minutes, inevitably perish?—’Tis wonderful indeed! What we could

not have believed, had we not seen with our eyes, or known by sure experience, The existence and history of fishes, without the comment of experience; would have seemed a philosophical romance; something to imagination amusing, but in reality impossible.—Yet, though the almighty power of our GOD, not only living creatures, but the greatest of living creatures are formed from under the waters*. In number countless, and in bulk matchless. Yea, and have their being, life, and health, in what we reckon the seat of suffocation and death.

They are all clothed and accoutred, in exact conformity to the clime. Not in swelling wool, or buoyant feathers; not in a flowing robe, or a full trimmed suit; but with as much compactness, and with as little superfluity, as possible. They are clad, or rather sheathed in scales. Which adhere closely to their bodies, and are always laid in a kind of natural oil. Than which apparel nothing can be more light; at the same time nothing more solid, and nothing so smooth. It hinders the fluid from penetrating their flesh; it prevents the cold from coagulating their blood; and enables them to make their way through the waters with the utmost facility. If, in their rapid progress, they strike against any hard substance, this their scaly doublet breaks the force of the blow; and effectually secures them, from casualties, at least from harm.

Their shape is slender and tapering; fitted to divide the waters, and to traverse, with the least obstruction, a very resisting medium.—Their tail is extremely flexible. It consists of vigorous muscles, and acts with uncommon agility. By its alternate impuse, it causes a progressive motion; and by repeated strokes, it darts the whole body to any distance. They have each a curious instrument †, by which they increase or diminish their specific gravity; sink like lead, or float like a cork; rise to what height, or descend to what depth, they please.—Where-ever I turn my view, I perceive a wisdom, perpetually fruitful of designs; a power, completely executing whatever is projected; a goodness,

* Job, xxvi. 5.

† The air bladder.

still, still communicating comfort and happiness—communicating them, in various, unsuspected, innumerable ways ; —nay, communicating them, both by what is withheld, and by what is imported ! as these creatures have, probably, no occasion for the sense of hearing ; as the impressions of sound have very little, if any existence in their habitation ; to have given them the usual furniture of ears, would have been an incumbrance, rather than a benefit.

This is the abode of Leviathen, hugest of living creatures. Before whom the broad-limbed elephant, and the tall-necked camel, are mere shrimps. A stretched-out promontory, when he sleeps ; a moving island, when he swims ; “ making the sea to boil like a pot ” when, unweidily wallowing, he takes his prodigious pastime.—Here, the voracious shark, that assassin of the finny nations, roams and commits his ravages : imbrues his horrid fangs, and marks his rapid path, with blood.—Here dwelt that great, and greatly surprising fish, whose fierceness and avidity the Almighty SOVEREIGN employed as his pursuivant, to arrest a fugitive prophet. Whose ample jaws, or capacious entrails, were the dungeon to confine a rebellious subject, and the cabin to lodge a penitent offender. Whose bulk and strength and speed were a kind of vessel, transporting this convict to the bottom of the mountains, and the bars of the earth *. After the criminal was sufficiently chastised and properly humbled, they served as a galley with oars, to convey him safe to land.

In the same element resides, (at least takes up part of his residence) that formidable monster, who is made without fear, and has not his like upon earth. He esteemeth the pointed iron as straw, and ponderous brass as rotten wood. His heart is as hard as a piece of nether millstone, and its scales are a coat of impenetrable mail. Strength not to be resisted, much less to be subdued, lies instrenched in his sinewy neck. His eyes are like the eyelids of the opening

day; and when he rolls those glaring orbs, there seems to be another morn risen on mid-moon. His teeth are terrible, jagged for rapine, and edged with death. His throat is as a burning furnace; clouds of smoke are poured from his mouth. None, no not the most resolute, dare provoke him to the combat, or even stir him up from his slumbers. He longeth at the shaking of the spear, and sorrow marcheth in triumph before him *. Whenever he raiseth himself, the mighty are afraid; where-ever he advanceth, ruin is there.—If a mere creature is capable of spreading such alarm and dread; how greatly is the CREATOR himself to be feared! who can turn the most harmless inhabitant of the ocean, into a ravenous alligator, or a horrid crocodile! who can arm every reptile of the ground, with all the force and rage of a lion!

'Tis impossible to enter on the muster-roll, those scaly herds and that minuter fry, which graze the sea-weed, or stray, through the coral groves. They are innumerable, as the sands which lie under them; countless, as the waves which cover them.—Here are uncouth animals, of monstrous shapes †, and amazing qualities. Some, that have been discovered by the inquisitive eye of man; and many more, that remain among the secrets of the hoary deep.—Here are sholes and sholes, of various characters; and of the diversified sizes; from the *gigantic* whale, whose flouncings “tempest the ocean,” to the *evanescent* anchovy, whose substance dissolves in the smallest tricassee.—Some, lodged in their pearly shells, and fattening on their rocky beds, seem attentive to no higher employ, than that of imbibing moist nutriment. These, but a small remove from vegeta-

* Job. xlv. 22.

† Monstrous shapes—such as the *Sword-fish*, whose upper jaw is lengthened into a strong and sharp sword. When it has be sometimes asserted to attack the ships, though armed with thunder; and is capable of piercing them, here, though ribbed with oak. This may be called the champion of the waters. When, then, it never exceeding sixteen feet in length, yet confiding in a weapon at once so true, and so tremendous, ituples not to give battle even to the Whale himself.—The *Serpent* has no tail; seems to be all head; and was it not for two fins, which all the part of body would be one entire round mass of flesh.—The *Poly-pod*, remarkable for its numerous legs, and as many claws: by which it has the appearance of a mere antell, and seems fitted only to crawl. At the same time, an excellence arising on the back, enables it to steer and pursue a steady course in the waves, so that it may pass under the two-fold character of a fish, and a reptile.

ble life, are almost rooted to the rocks, on which they lie reposed. While other, active as the winged creation, and swift as an arrow from the Indian bow, shoot along the yielding flood, and range at large the spacious regions of the deep.

Here is the *Tortoise*, who never moves but under her own portable pent-house. The *Lobster*, which, whether she sleeps or wakes, is still in a state of defence, and clad in jointed armour. The *Oyster*, a sort of living jelly, ingarrisoned in a bulwark of native stone. With many other kinds of sea reptiles, or as the psalmist speaks, *things creeping innumerable*.—I am surprised at the variety of their figure, and charmed with the splendor of their colours. Unsearchable is the wisdom, and endless the contrivance, of the all-creating GOD!—Some are rugged in their form; clumsy in their gait; and little better than hideous in their aspect. Their shells seem to be the production of a disorderly jumble, rather than the effects of skill and design. Yet we shall find, even in these seeming irregularities, the nicest dispositions. These abodes, uncouth as they may appear, are adapted to the genius of their respective tenants; are exactly suited to their particular exigencies. Neither the *Ionic* delicacy, nor the *Corinthian* richness, nor any other order of architecture, would have served their purposes half so well, as this coarse and homely fabric.

Some on the other hand, are extremely neat. Their structure is all symmetry and elegance. No enamel in the world is comparable to their polish. There is not a room of state, in all the palaces of Europe, so brilliantly adorned, as the dining-room and the bed-chamber of the little fish, that dwells in mother of pearl. Such a lovely mixture of red, and blue, and green, so delightfully standing the most clear and glistening ground, is no where else to be seen. The royal power may covet it, and human art may mimic it; but neither the one, nor the other, nor both united, will ever be able to equal it.

But what I admire more, than all their streaks and their spots, more than all their regular, or romantic shapes, is, the extraordinary provision made for their safety.—Nothing

is more relishing and palatable than their flesh. Nothing more heavy and sluggish than their motions.* As they have no speed to escape, neither have they any dexterity to elude the foe. Were they naked or unguarded, they must be an easy prey to every free-booter, that roams the ocean.—To prevent this fatal consequence, what is only clothing to other animals, is to them a clothing, a house, and a castle. They have a fortification, that grows with their growth, and is a part of themselves. By this means, they live secure amidst millions and millions of ravenous jaws. By this means, they are imparked, as it were, in their own shell; and, screened from every other assault, are reserved for the use and pleasure of mankind.

This is the birth-place of *Cod*, the standing repast of lent. This is the nursery of *Turbot*, for its exquisite relish justly styled, the pheasant of the waters. Hence comes the *Sturgeon*, delicious even in pickle, and a regale for royal luxury: hence the *Flander*; dappled with reddish spots * and a supply for vulgar wants—here dwell the *Mackarel*, decked, when haled from their native element, richly decked with the most glossy dyes: the *Herring*, whose back is motled with azure, and his belly seek with silver: the *Salmon*, in plainer habit, but of larger substance, and higher esteem, than either or both the preceding.—These, when shotten and lean, wander wildly up and down the vast abyss. When plump and delicate, they throng our creeks, and swarm in our bays: they repair to the shallows, or haunt the running streams.—Who bids these creatures evacuate the shores, and disperse themselves into all quarters, when they become worthless and unfit for our service? who rallies and recalls the undisciplined vagrants, as soon as they are improved into desirable food? who appoints the very scene of our ambushes, to be the place

* Here is the appearance of a mistake: Not the Flounder, I apprehend but the Plaice is dappled with reddish spots: Yet so very trivial is the mistake, that to remark it might be deemed a piece of refined impertinence, did I not make some amends by the following observations. With which, I can promise myself, the reader will not be displeased. Especially as it exhibits a very significant instance of GOD Almighty's indulgent goodness, even to the meanest of his creation, who alters the general method of his proceeding, as requisite, for the benefit or the comfort of any animal.

of their rendezvous? so that they come like volunteers to our nets? surely, the furrow is signed, the summons issued, and the point of an union settled, by a providence ever indulgent to mankind; ever studious to treat us with dainties, and *load us with benefits**

We have wondered at † our SAVIOUR's penetration and power—his penetration, which, though the sea was at a distance, and walls intervened, discerned the fish, that had just swallowed a piece of money—his power, which, without any delay ‡, brought the lawless rambler, charged with the silver spoil, to Peter's hook. But is it not equally wonderful, to observe such innumerable multitudes of finny visitants, annually heaving our friths, and crouding upon our shores? making this welcome approach, at the most proper periods of the year, and in an orderly succession of one species to another. All which furnish our tables with a wholesome and delicate repast; at the same time, that they yield to our nation a revenue §, more certain, and no less considerable, than the mines of Peru.

These approach, while those of enormous size and tremendous appearance abandon the shores. The latter might indanger the fisherman's safety, and would certainly scare away the valuable fish from our coasts. They are therefore restrained by an invisible hand, and abscond in the abysses of the ocean. Just as the wild beasts of the earth, impelled by the same over-ruling power, hide themselves in the recesses of the forest,—A ship, infected with a pestilential distemper, is obliged to keep off at sea, and not permitted to enter the port, till she has performed her quarantine. In like manner, these monsters of the deep, whose very business is distruction, are laid under a providential interdict. Only with this desirable difference, that, as their

* Psal. lxxviii. 19,

† See letter VIII. p. 96.

‡ Without any delay—For the directions to Peter are, take the fish that first cometh up.

§ We are told, that the banks of Newfoundland alone, bring in to the proprietors of that fishery, a revenue of several millions every year.—And they will in all probability, be an unimpaired resource of treasure, when the richest mines now worked in the world, are choaked up or exhausted.

presence would always be pernicious, they are never suffered to come near. Their quarantine is perpetual.

*Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee**; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee—that the LORD is gracious—that his tender mercies are over all his works—that to us he is superabundantly and profusely good. Having ordered all things in the surges of the ocean, as well as on the surface of the ground, for our rich accommodation, and for our greatest advantage.

One circumstance, relating to the natives of the deep, is very peculiar, and no less astonishing. As they never sow, nor reap; have neither the produce of the hedges, nor the gleanings of the field; they are obliged to plunder and devour one another, for necessary subsistence. They are a kind of licensed banditti, that make violence and murder† their professed trade.—By this means, prodigious devastations ensue; and without proper, without very extraordinary recruits, the whole race must continually dwindle, and at length be totally extinct.—Where they to bring forth, like the most prolific of our terrestrial animals, a dozen only, or a score at each birth; the increase would be unspeakably too small for the consumption. The weaker species would be destroyed by the stronger; and, in time, the stronger must perish, even by their successful endeavours to maintain themselves.—Therefore, to supply millions of assassins with their prey, and millions of tables with their food, yet not to depopulate the watery realms; the issue produced by every breeder is almost incredible. They spawn, not

* Job xlii 7, 8. The earth is represented, as bearing witness to the immense benignity of the blessed GOD. Some minutes, or a short abstract, of her testimony on this occasion, may be seen in Letter VI.

† To this, I believe, the Prophet alludes, in that remarkable expression; Thou makest men as the fishes of the sea. Thou sufferest men to come to it without restraint or control, all manner of outrages. What should be a civil community, is a scene of oppression. The weakest are a prey to the strongest, and every one seeks the destruction of his neighbour. *Habak, i. 14.*

by scores or hundreds, but by thousands and by millions. A single mother is pregnant with a nation. By which amazing, but most needful expedient, a periodical reparation is made, proportionable to the immense havock.

How welcome this reparation is, and how very serviceable, let those forlorn people acknowledge, who dwell under the northern pole. Their wants are few, and their desires moderate. Yet moderate as their desires are, they receive no supply from the Orchard of the Furrow. Instead of acres waving with yellow grain, or trees bending with ruddy fruit, their fields are frozen to iron, and buried under mountains of snow.—Since the earth denies them her usual succours, the sea takes them under her parental care.—Even the wild tempestuous ocean, seems to pity those poor outcasts; and opens to them her hand, or (if you please) administers to them her tears. It is said of the founder of Rome, that, when a helpless and exposed infant, he was suckled by a ravenous wolf. It is certain, that the natives of Greenland and Zembla, being abandoned by their common mother, are nourished by the howling billows.—These furnish them with plenty of fish: whose bones yield timber for their huts, and utensils for their families; while the oil and the flesh, afford a warming liquor, and a fattening food, for their meals. Which are to them, a much better sustenance, more suitable to their constitution, and clime, than the sallads of the garden, or the sheaves of the harvest.—Thus does a gracious providence give to all, even the most destitute of men, not only their daily bread, but the bread which is most proper for their state*; is best adapted to preserve them in health, in vigour, and cheerfulness.

As the sea is peopled with animated inhabitants, is also variegated with vegetable productions. Some, soft as wool; others hard as stone. Some rise, like a leafless shrub; some are expanded, in the form of a net; some grow with their heads downward, and seem to be hanging on, rather than springing from, the jutting of the rocks these may, with much greater propriety, than the famous plantations of Si-

miramis, be called pensile gardens. These—but, methinks, I hear the check of inspired wisdom; *hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth**? A just reproof! As my walk reached ne farther than barely the purlieus of the ocean; as neither you nor I have ever taken a single turn among those submarine groves as *Moses, Joshua, and Jonah*; the only writers that ever made the wonderful tour, intent upon more important themes, have left us no memoirs relating to this curious point; I shall not venture to advance any thing particular on the subject. Only one remark I would offer in general.—

The herbs and trees, subsisting on the land, are nourished by the juices, which permeate the soil, and fluctuate in the air. For this purpose they are furnished with leaves, to collect the one; and with roots to attract the other. Whereas, the sea-plants, finding sufficient nourishment in the surrounding waters have no occasion to detach a party of roots into the ground, and forage the earth for sustenance. Instead therefore of penetrating, they are but just tacked to the bottom; and adhere to some solid substance, only with such a degree of tenacity as may secure them from being tossed to and fro, by the random agitation of the waves.

We see from this, and numberless other instances, what a diversity there is in the operations of the great CREATOR's hand. Yet every alteration is an improvement, and each new pattern has a *peculiar fitness* of its own.—The same œconomy takes place, such a difference of administration I mean, in his government of the rational world. In “choosing an heritage for his people,” and assigning a condition to each of his servants, their is a great variety with respect to individuals; yet a perfect uniformity, and complete harmony, with respect to the whole.—Some he calls out to a course of distinguished labours. They make an illustrious figure in life, and appear *as a city set on an † hill*! Others he consigns over to obscurity. They are like

the prophets, whom good *Obadiah* hid in a cave, and are styled *his secret ones* *. Those, the cedars, which stand conspicuous on the top of *Lebanon*: these, the violets, which lie concealed at the foot of a briar.

St. *Paul* was eminently qualified for busy scenes, and the the most extensive services. He is introduced, therefore, into the places of concourse. His ministry lies amidst the most renowned populous cities. Even his imprisonment at *Rome*, seems to have been a providential expedient for fixing him, as it were on the stage of public observation and in the very center of universal intelligence. Where, his preaching was like plunging a stone into the midst of a smooth canal; which not only affects the neighbouring parts of the surface, but spreads the floating circles over all the wide expanse †.—Whereas, the beloved *John*, being less fitted to bustle among a crowd, is sent into the unfrequented solitary island; there to indulge the flights of heavenly contemplation; and receive, with uninterrupted attention, the mysterious visions of GOD.—*Job* shall have thorns in his path; have the dunghill for his seat; and be exposed, as a mark to all the arrows of tribulation. *Solomon* shall dip his foot in oil; shall be elevated on the throne of royalty; and surrounded with the most lavish carresses of heaven.

In all this seeming, this more than seeming contrariety, there is a display, not only of sovereign authority, but of consummate benignity and wisdom.—The great HEAD of the church, acts like a judicious general; and appoints such a station to each of his soldiers, as corresponds with the ability he gives. He acts like the most skilful physician; and prescribes such a remedy for all his patients, as is most nicely suited to their respective cases. He knows

Q q

* Psal. lxxxiii. 3.

† Therefore the Apostle, speaking of this abode and his preaching at *Rome*, has these very emphatical words; that all the Gentiles might bear. 2 Tim. iv. 17. which, considered in the preceeding light, have a peculiar propriety. Because, to *Rome* they repaired from all quarters; and from thence they returned, into all parts of the known world.

the precise point of time, the particular place of abode, the peculiar circumstances of condition, which are most exactly proper for each and every of his children; and, like a tender as well as unerring father; what he knows to be best, that he constantly allots.—I said like a general, like a physician, like a father. But the comparison is low; the language is inexpressive; CHRIST is all that is implied in these relations, and unspeakably more—O! that we may rejoice in the superintendency of such a SAVIOUR; and not only resign ourselves to his will, but thank him for managing the helm—thank him for steering our course, through the changes of the present hour, and all the uncertainties of futurity. Since, whatever our froward and petulant passions, may suggest, the LORD's ways are so far from being unequal, that they have all possible fitness and propriety; they are ordered “in number, weight, and measure.”

All is so very different from the prospects, which lately presented themselves, that I can hardly forbear asking, whether I am not translated into a new world?—Where are the fruitful vales, garnished and enriched with the CREATOR's bounty? Where are the branching groves, vocal and harmonious with their MAKER's praise? No cultured field, no opening blossom, not so much as a green leaf appears. None of my late entertainments remain, only the cooling zephyrs. Which are no longer perfumed with the breath of flowers, but impregnated with the freshness of the ocean. Yet, though all those lovely landscapes are withdrawn; though the gurgling fountain is silenced, and the blooming garden lost: I am not far from the origin, both of the odours, which exhale from the one; and of the crystal, which flows from the other. I am now upon the margin of that *grand reservoir*, which supplies the country with its fertility, and the parterre with its beauty.—The sea is the exhaustible cistern of the universe. The air and sun constitute the mighty engine, which works without intermission, to raise the liquid treasure. While the clouds serve as so many aqueducts, to convey the genial stores along the atmosphere; and distribute them at seasonable periods, and in regular proportions through all the regions of the globe.

I question, whether the united application of mankind could, with their utmost skill, and with all possible percolations, fetch a single drop of perfectly sweet water *, from this unmeasurable pit of brine. Yet the action of solar heat draws off, every hour, every minute, millions and millions of tons, in vaporous exhalations †. Which, being skillfully parceled out, and securely lodged in *the bottles of heaven* ‡; are sent abroad, sweetened and refined, without any brackish tincture, or the least bituminous sediment.—Sent abroad upon the wings of the wind, to distill in dews, or pour themselves in rain; to ooze from the orifices of fountains §; to trickle along the veins of rivulets; to rise in the cavities of wells; to roll, in many a headlong torrent, from the sides of mountains; to flow, in copious streams, amidst the bosom of burning deserts, and through the heart of populous kingdoms. In order to refresh and fertilize, to beautify and enrich, every soil, in every clime.

How amiable is the goodness, and how amazing is the power, of the world's adorable **MAKER**!—How amiable his goodness! in distributing so largely, what is absolutely necessary, and exceedingly beneficial. That water, without which we can scarce perform any business, or enjoy any comfort, should be every one's property. Should spring up from the soil; should drop down from the clouds; should stream by our houses; should take a journey, from

* I have not forgotten, what was lately affirmed in our public papers; that a certain ingenious gentleman, I think in the city of Durham, had found out the art of sweetening sea-water. What he produced, might probably approve itself to the taste, and without its usefulness. Yet I cannot but query, whether it will be found to have all those fine, balmy, salutiferous qualities, which distinguish and recommend the rain water. I would not attempt to depreciate any valuable invention; yet I should not very much wonder, if the puny Alembic could equal this grand apparatus of nature.

† It is supposed, that from the Mediterranean sea alone, there arises, in vaporous exhalations, more than five thousand millions of tons, within the space of one summer-day. Yet the Mediterranean sea bears no more proportion to the whole extent of the ocean, than a public road bears to the dimensions of a country, through which it leads.

‡ So the clouds are elegantly styled in sacred writ, Job xxxviii. 37.

§ We are obliged to Clemens Romanus for the most just and delicate representation of fountains and their usefulness, that perhaps any writer exhibits. The comparison, I believe is his own; and nothing can exceed it, as to propriety and duty.

the ends of the earth, and the extremities of the ocean, on purpose to serve us.—How amazing his power ! That a boundless mass of fluid salt, intolerably nauseous to the human taste, should be the original spring, which deals out every palatable draught to mankind, and quenches the thirst of every animal ! Doubtless, the power by which this is effected, can extract comfort from our afflictions, advantage from our calamities, and “ make all things work together “ for good *”.

Vast and various are the advantages †, which we derive from the liquid element: vast, as its unbounded extent; various, as its ever-mutable surface.—The sweet waters glide along the earth, in spacious and sportive currents. With their humid train, their exhaling moister, and their gay appearance, they enliven and exhilarate the adjacent country. While plenty follows, where-ever they flow.—By giving a conti ual shake to the circumambient air, they prevent its stagnation; they disperse their own vapours; and promote the purity of their sister-element. Indeed, these watery rambles impart much the same improvement to the air, the prospect, the whole scene, as vivacity and cheerfulness add to the temper of their rational inhabitants.

These circulating floods pass by opulent cities, and receiving all their filth, rid them of a thousand nuisances. Which, when once committed to these *fluid scavengers* are as effectually secreted, as if they were buried at the very center of the earth.—Yet, though they condescend to so mean an employ, they are fitted for more honorable services. They enter the gardens of a prince, and compose some of the most delightful ornaments of the place. They glitter upon the eye, as they float in the ample canal. They amuse the imagination, as they ascend in curious *Jet d'Eaus*. They yield a nobler entertainment, as, forming themselves

* Rom viii. 28.

† The high value which mankind set upon this element, and the many benefits they receive from its ministration, both these particulars are very strongly expressed by the Hebrews. Cant. vii. 4. Isai. vii. 3.

into sheets of sloping silver, they fall in graceful or in grand cascades.—If, instead of beautifiers, we think proper to make use of them as drudges, they ply at our mills; they toil incessantly at the wheel; and, by working the hugest engines, rid us of abundance of fatigue, and save us a proportionable degree of expense.

So forcibly they act, when collected; and most surprisingly they insinuate, when detached. They throw themselves into the body of a plant: they penetrate the minutest of its organized tubes: and, subtil beyond all expression, they find a passage through meanders, too small for the eye to discern, too numerous and intricate even for imagination to follow.—How difficultly does the mason's labour, bending under the burden of mortar on his head, push his way up the rounds of a ladder! while these servants in the employ of nature, carry their load to a much greater height; and climb with the utmost ease, even without the assistance of steps or of stairs. They convey the nutrimental stores of vegetation, from the lowest fibres that are plunged into the soil, to the very topmost twigs that wave amidst the clouds. They are the caterers for the vegetable world*; or (if I may be allowed the expression) the sutlers, which attend the whole host of plants; to furnish them with seasonable refreshment, and necessary provision. By means of which, the "trees of the LORD are full of sap, even the cedars of Lebanon which HE hath planted†". Notwithstanding their prodigious elevation, and vast diffusion; though they are abandoned by man, and deprived of all human cultivation; yet, not a single branch is destitute of leaves, nor a single leaf of moisture.

Besides the salutary, cleanly, and serviceable circulation of the rivers; the sea has a libration, no less advantageous, and much more remarkable.—Every day, this immense collection of waters, for the space of five or six hours, flows

* St. Peter seems to have hinted at this property of the waters, in a remarkable passage; which is somewhat obscured in the English version, and therefore seldom understood by the English reader. The earth standing out of the water and in the water. 2 Pet. iii. 5.

† Psal. civ. 16.

towards the land. After a short pause, it retires again to its inmost caverns ; taking up nearly the same interval for the retreat, as it required for the access.—How great is the power, which sets the whole fluid world in motion ! which protrudes to the shores such an inconceivable weight of waters, without any concurrence from the winds, frequently in direct opposition to all their force ! How gracious also is the providence, which bids the mighty element perform its tumbling revolutions, with all the exactness of time and measure ! Was it suffered to advance, with a lawless and unlimited swell ; it might sweep over kingdoms, and deluge whole continents. Was it irregular and uncertain in its approaches, navigation would be at a stand, and trade become precarious.—But, being constant at its stated periods, and never exceeding its appointed bounds, it creates no alarm to the country, and affords very considerable aids to traffic.

I said, constant. For at the proper hour, or rather at the precisely proper minute, the waters are sure to be in motion. They flow with the most ready obedience, like servants at their master's call. They croud as it were in contending multitudes, ambitious to perform their CREATOR's will.—Rushing up our large rivers, they clear and deepen the passage. In many places, they spread a copious flood, where a dry and empty waste lay before.

Is the sailor returned from his voyage, and waiting at the mouth of the channel ? the flux is ready to convey is vessel to the very doors of the owner ; and without any hazard of striking on the rocks, or being fastened in the sands.—Has the merchant freighted his ship ? would he have it transferred to the ocean ? the reflux tenders its service ; and bears away the load, with singular expedition, and with equal safety.—Behold O man ! How greatly thou art beloved, how highly favoured by thy MAKER ! In what part of his works has he forgotten or overlooked thy welfare ? shew me a creature, point out a spot ; in the formation or disposition of which, he has not been mindful of thy interest ? *he has made thee to have dominion over the works of his hands, and has put all things in subjection under thy feet. All sheep and oxen ; the fowls of the air, and the fishes ;*

yea, and the surges of the sea *, are conducive to thy benefit. Even these, wild and impetuous as they are, yield their willing backs, to receive thy load ; and, like a tractable as well as indefatigable beast of burden, carry it to the place, which thou shalt nominate.

What preserves this vast flood in a state of perpetual purity ? it is the universal sewers, into which are discharged the refuse and filth of the whole world. That which would defile the land, and pollute the air, is transmitted to the ocean, and neither mischief nor inconvenience cause. Those swarms of *locusts*—which, while living were a plague to *Pharaoh*, by their loathed intrusion ; and when dead, might have caused a more dreadful plague, by their noisome stench—swept into the sea, were neither pestilential, nor offensive. How then is this receptacle of every nuisance kept clean ? Why does it not contract a noxious taint, and diffuse contagion far and near ? Such as would render it a *grave* to the aquatic, and *bane* to the terrestrial animals ?—'Tis owing, partly to its incessant motion, partly to its saline quality. By the one, it is secured from any internal principle of corruption ; by the other, it works itself clear from every adventitious defilement.

A directory this, and a pattern for me !—Thus may divine *grace*, like the penetrating power of salt, cure the depravity of my heart, and rectify the disorders of my temper ! Season my words, and make all my conversation savoury !—Thus may a continual course of activity, in my secular and my sacred vocation, prevent the pernicious effects of indolence ! let me daily exercise, or be attempting to exercise, the graces of christianity. Lest faith become feeble ; lest hope contract dimness ; and charity wax cold.

When I began my walk, the waters were upon the ebb. They slunk away from all the strand, as an army overpowered, though not put to flight, withdraws from the field. Now like the same army, re-inspired by their commanders, or re-inforced by an accession of troops, they are returning, as it were to the charge.—Wave rises upon wave, and bil

low rolls over billow. Their progress is slow, but determined and persevering. Much of the smooth sandy area is already over-run. The extremities of the rocks are covered. The foamy invaders approach nearer and nearer. Nothing can divert, nothing retard their course. Though Canutus* himself was in the way; though his royal authority and strict prohibition interposed; nay though all the forces of his kingdom were up with orders to stem the torrent; this grand detachment from the deep would scorn the feeble opposition; would not be checked so much as a single moment; but continue, still continue the wide expansive swell, till it as reached the destined point.—So, may I always abound in communion with GOD, or in beneficence to men; resigning one religious or charitable employ only to enter upon another; and be thus pressing forward still pressing forward, to the prize of my high calling in CHRIST JESUS.—Differing from those regular vicissitudes of the ocean, only in one particular; that my endeavours never ebb, *my* soul never draw back. Since this would be if *temporary*, to my grievous loss; if *final*, to my aggravated perdition.

The tide is, now at its height. The spacious sandy plain, on which I lately walked is overflowed. A tract, almost unmeasurable, is taken from our feet, and hid from our eyes. A thousand figures, and a thousand footsteps, imprinted on the level beach, are erased. And had there been ten thousand times ten thousand more, they would all have been obliterated with equal ease.—How happy are they, whose sins are thus covered! whose iniquities are all blotted out! and not one of their transgressions remembered any more!—Well my soul, be of good comfort! Certainly the blood of the divine REDEEMER, is able to do this for thee; even for thee, chiefest of sinners. What guilt can be too great, for an infinite atonement to expiate? What guilt can

* Alluding to a memorable and instructive story, recorded of King Canutus. Who, probably without having read, had nevertheless thoroughly learned, that excellent lesson of Horace;

Regum timendorum in proprios Georget,

Reges in istos Imperium est Jovis.

be *so great*, as the merit of an incarnate **GOD**? Offering the body of his flesh to death—offering the blood of his heart to be spilt—offering his very soul, and his whole person, through the eternal **SPIRIT**, as a spotless victim, to **GOD** for us!—Can I doubt whether this immensely grand propitiation, is able to do for my conscience, what these reflux waters have done on the margin of the ocean? Would not this be a dishonor to the blessed **JESUS**, greater than the lashes of the scourge, and the crown of thorns; viler than the insults, mockery, and spitting?

Consider the sea in another capacity, and it connects the remotest realms of the universe; by facilitating an intercourse between their respective inhabitants.—What shortsighted beings are mankind ! how superficial their views ! how unavoidable therefore their frequent mistakes ! the ancients looked upon this bottomless deep, as an unpassable * gulf. If our forefathers were so egregiously mistaken in this instance ; let not us too peremptorily pronounce upon any difficult or mysterious point. Lest succeeding generations, or a more enlightened state, should cover us with the double confusion of childish ignorance, and foolish conceit.

We have clearly demonstrated, we happily experienced, the very reverse of that grey-headed surmise to be true. The ocean, instead of being a bar of separation, is the great bond of union. For this purpose, it is never exhausted, though it supplies the whole firmament with clouds, and the whole earth with rains. Nor ever overflows, though all the rivers in the universe are perpetually augmenting its stores, and pouring in their tributary floods.—By means of this element, we travel farther, than birds of the strongest pinion fly; and discover tracts, which the vulture's eye has never seen †. We make a visit to nations, that lie drown-

R R

• ————— Deus abscondit.
Prudens Oceano di Incomabili
Tales. HOR.

† Job xxviii. 7.

ed in their midnight slumbers, when every industrious person on this part of the globe, is bestirring himself in all the hurry of business. We cultivate an acquaintance with the sun-burnt Negro, and the shivering Iclander. We cross the flaming line, we penetrate the frozen pole; and wing our way even round the world.

This is the great vehicle of commerce.—Not to mention the floating castles, which contain whole armies and their commanders; which bear the thunder of the cannons, and all the dreadful artillery of war; which are capable of demolishing fortresses, and spreading terror among nations.—Let us only contemplate the trading vessels; how numerous! of what large dimension! and of what prodigious burdens! which are continually passing and repassing this universal thoroughfare!

There go the ships.—Ships, that are freighted, not with sacks, but with harvests of corn; that carry not pipes, but vintages of wine; that are laden, not with bars of iron, blocks of marble or wedges of gold, but with whole quarries of massy stone, and whole mines of ponderous metal. All which, lodged in these *volatile store-houses*, and actuated by the breath of heaven, are wafted to the very ends of the earth: wafted, enormous and unwieldy as they are, more expeditiously than the light Birkin bowls along the road: almost as speedily, as the nimble-footed roe bounds over the hills*.

Astonishing ordination of eternal wisdom! Yet most graciously contrived for the benefit of mankind! I can hardly satisfy my view, in beholding this rolling chaos; stretched, ten thousand times farther, than my eye can reach. I can never cease my admiration, in contemplating its amazing properties.—That an element, so unstable and fugitive, should bear up such an immense weight as would bend the firmest floors, or burst the strongest beams! That the thin and yielding air should drive on, with so

* A ship, under a brisk and steady gale, will sail at the rate of 216 miles in 24 hours: persevering, if the wind continues favourable, in the same rapid career, for several days together. A courser, which, considering both its swiftness and duration, cannot be equalled by the ablest horse, is not by the inferior creature that treads the ground.

much facility and speed, bodies of such excessive bulk, as the strength of a legion, or an army, would be unable to move.—That the air and the water, acting in conjunction, should carry to the distance of many thousand miles, what the united force of men and machines, could scarcely drag a single yard.—Puny and despicable are our attempts: but great and marvelous are thy works, O LORD GOD Almighty! If thou wilt work, says the prophet, who or what shall let it*! Neither the meanness of the instrument, nor the greatness of the event. A sling and a stone shall lay the gigantic bravo in the dust †. An ox-load shall do more execution than a train of artillery ‡. Even a “worm shall “thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make “the hills as chaff”. GOD-ALL-SUFFICIENT is his name; and out of weakness he maketh his strength perfect.—Oh! that we, my dear Aspasio—that I especially—may be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might! Then as the light air is made to act with a more forcible impulse, than the most vigorous engines; as the fluid water is made to sustain more ponderous loads, than the most substantial works of masonry; so we, who in ourselves are nothing but impotence, shall be enabled to triumph over the legions of hell, and tread down all the temptations of the world.

How are the mariners conducted through this liquid plain, than which nothing is more wide, and nothing more wild? Here is no track to be followed; no post of direction to be consulted; nor any shepherd's hut, where the wandering traveller may ask his way. Yet the voyage is, perhaps, no less than a thousand leagues. Are the voyagers guided, by a pillar of fire in the night, or a moveable cloud in the day? As the Sons of Jacob and Joseph were escorted through the eastern deserts. No; but by a mean, contemptible, and otherwise worthless fossil.

* Isai. xlii. 13.

† 1 Sam. xvii. 50.

‡ Judges iii. 31.

§ Isai. xli. 14, 15.

The Apostle James mentions it, as a very observable fact ; that the “ ships, which are so great, and driven of “ fierce winds, yet are turned about with a very small “ helm, whithersoever the Governor listeth *”. Is it not equally wonderful, that they should be led through such a pathless and unmeasurable waste, by so small an expedient as the intervention of the loadstone † ?—Till this surprising mineral was discovered, and its properties were improved, navigation lay in its cradle. Was, at best, a mere infant, which crept timorously along the coasts ; was obliged to keep within sight of the shores ! and when once driven out beyond the narrow sphere of her land-marks, could neither ascertain her situation, nor pursue her voyage. But this guide—when every beacon on the top of the hills, is vanished from the acutest ken ; where nothing but skies are seen above, and seas alone appear below—this guide points out the proper passage. This communicates an intelligence, which shines clear in the thickest darkness, and remains steady in the most tempestuous agitations. This has given not indeed birth, but maturity to navigation ; and turned her swadling bands into wings. This has emboldened her to launch into the heart of the ocean, and enabled her to range from pole to pole.

A needle touched by the loadstone, guided *Columbus* through the vast Atlantic, and led him to the discovery of a new world. The direction and advices of this simple instrument have opened for our sailors a way to both the *Indies*. And a sea-compass, which cost, perhaps, no more than half a crown, is the means of conveying into our harbours the rarities and riches of the universe. Thus does GOD, both in the operations of nature, and the administrations of providence, accomplish the most important ends by the most inconsiderable means.—When the formidable *Sisera*

* James iii. 4.

† I am aware, that other expedients are used for shaping a proper course on the ocean, such as making observations, from the sun and heavenly bodies, by mathematical instruments. But these, I believe, are only subordinate aids to the needle. The grand regulator is the magnet. I have heard an experienced sailor declare ; he would rather be without his quadrant than without his compass.

is to be cut off, the blow shall be given, not by some puissant champion, but by the hand of a woman *. When *Jericho* is to be demolished, those impregnable fortifications shall fall, not beneath the stroke of battering engines, but before the sound of rams horns †.—When a hundred thousand *Midianites* are to be routed, the LORD of hosts will gain this signal victory, not by numerous legions completely armed, but by a handful of *Israelites*, accoutered only with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers ‡.—Who would have thought, that from the root of *Jesse*, a root out of a dry ground, should arise that great tree, which *stretches her boughs unto the sea, and her height unto the heavens, and her branches unto the ends of the earth* ? That the despised *Galilean* and the carpenter's son, should be the SAVIOUR of the world, and the HEIR of all things ? Nay ; that a person humbled like the meanest of slaves, and executed like the vilest of malefactors ; nailed to a cross, and laid prostrate among the dead ; that HE should restore life and immortality to ruined sinners ; should open the gates of grace and glory on lost mankind ? that a few illiterate creatures, taken from the barge, the oar, and the net, should confute philosophers, and convert kings ; should overthrow the strongholds of idolatry, and plant *Christianity* on its ruin !—This is a circumstance, which though a stumblingblock to some people, has considerably strengthened my faith. It is perfectly agreeable to the ALMIGHTY's manner. It is (if I may so speak) the distinguishing *turn* of his hand, and the peculiar *style* of his works. Whence does he raise the charmingly beauteous flower ? whence the magnificent myriads of the forest-oaks ? whence the boundless and inestimable stores of the harvest from rude, from small, almost unnoticed seeds ; from principles, which bear not the least proportion to their effect.—Besides ; this most emphatically speaks THE GOD. It *shows the lighting down of his glorious arm* § ; and absolutely precludes all the pretensions of human arrogance, or finite power. Appropriates the ho-

* Judg. iv. 9.

† Josh. vi. 5.

‡ Judg. vii. 19.

§ Psal. xxx. 30.

nor to that supreme AGENT, before whom the *easy* and the *arduous* are both alike. All men that see it must confess, **THIS HATH GOD DONE.**

Through this channel, are imported our island the choice productions, and the peculiar treasures, of every nation under heaven. So that you and I can breakfast upon a dissolution of the *American* kernel †; and see the rich nutrimental liquor froth in our cups, without ever tempting the foaming brine. We can steep the delicately-flavoured Chinese leaf, in the waters of our own parlour, and be regaled with an infusion of the finely-scented Arabian berry. We can season the friendly bowl with the juices of the orange, or refresh our clammy palate with the pulp of the tamarind; without feeling that fervent heat, which imparts such a fever-cooling virtue to the latter. We can pile upon our salvers a pyramid of Italian figs; fill the interstices with the sky-dried raisins of Malaga; and form a summit for the inviting structure, with the *Pastacia* Nut of Alleppo.—By this means, the eastern spices exhale their odours on our tables; and the western canes transfuse their sweetness into our viands. We clothe our bodies with the vegetable fleeces ‡ of the south, and line our apparel with warm furry spoils from the north. We can wear the pearl, polished in the abysses of the Persian gulf; and walk on the carpets manufactured in the dominions of the great Mogul; yet neither expose ourselves to the rage of boisterous seas nor the more dreaded treachery of barbarous people.—In short by the grand and beneficial expedient of navigation, every tide wafts into our ports the abundance of the universe to be laden on our quays. London becomes a mart of nations; and almost every private house in the kingdom, is embellished or accommodated from the four quarters of the globe.

‡ Called the *cocos*, which affords the principal ingredient of chocolate, and grows on a small tree in America.

† Cotton, which is a sort of wool encompassing the seed of a tree — Its fruit is of an oval form, about the size of a nut. As it ripens it grows black on the outside; and, by the heat of the sun, opens in several places, discovering the cotton though the clefts, which is of an admirable whiteness. See *CRAVE. Dict.*

Almost every private house.—Is not this more like rhetorical flourish than real truth? are not all the advantages I have mentioned the peculiar portion of the rich? Is not the sea, like high life and the gay world, somewhat capricious and partial? bestowing lavishly her favours on the wealthy, at the same time that she neglects the needy?—Quite the reverse. Like her most exalted yet most condescending CREATOR, she is no respecter of persons. She deals out her liberalities to all; to the wealthy, such as are suitable to their circumstances; to the indigent, such as are best adapted to their condition. If she ornaments the abodes of the first, she employs the hands of the last; furnishes these with gainful labour, those with elegant accommodations. What a multitude of industrious people acquire a livelihood, by preparing the commodities intended for exportation! and what a multitude of dexterous artificers maintain their families, by manufacturing the materials imported from abroad!

It is reckoned a valuable species of beneficence, to provide proper work for the poor. This withdraws them from any temptations, and preserves them from much wickedness. It hinders them from being a burden to themselves, and a nuisance to the public. They might otherwise be idle, and as vermine on the body politic; or even mutinous, and as vipers in the bowels of the nation. Whereas, by exerting themselves in a due subordination, and with becoming diligence, they are the very sinews of the community; or like the grand wheel in the machine of state, whose incessant activity distributes plenty, and pours innumerable conveniencies through the whole.—What a master then, or rather what a mistress, is the sea! How extensive her correspondence, and how large her demand for workmen! Into what branch of trade does she not enter? what kind of ingenious science, or useful toil, does she not befriend? how many millions of honest, but needy persons are engaged in her service? and how amply are they repaid for their pains! “They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep”. They also that dwell among their own people, and abide in the

villages, even they enjoy the bounty, and share the advantages of the ocean. "They suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand *". For, though it is false philosophy, to suppose the waters themselves strained through subterranean passages, into the inland countries; yet it is an undeniable truth, that their beneficial effects are transfused into every town, every hamlet, and every cottage.

Surely, the inhabitants of our isle, have reason to turn the prediction of Moses, concerning the tribe of Joseph, into a devout and grateful acknowledgment.—"Blessed of the LORD † is our land. Blessed with the precious things of heaven, with the dew, and with the deep that coucheth beneath. With the precious things brought forth by the sun, and with the precious things thrust forth by the moon. With the chief things of the antient mountains, and with the precious things of the everlasting hills: and with the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof. May we also enjoy the good-will of HIM, who dwelt in the bush *; and the grace of HIM, who hung on the tree! may the eternal GOD be our refuge; and underneath both us and our interests, may his everlasting arms be spread!—Happy then wilt thou be, thrice happy, O England! thy temporal advantages, and thy spiritual privileges considered, it may truly be said, who, or what nation, is like unto thee?

This for my country. Now let me wish for myself:

GOD of all worlds! source and supreme of things!
From whom all life, from whom duration springs!
Intense O! let me for thy glory burn.

* Deut. xxxiii. 19.

† Is, (so I would translate the original) not be; in the predictive, not precatory form. This implies a fulness of faith, and distinguishes prophecy from prayer; best fruits the extraordinary illumination of Moses, and does most honor to the omniscient SPIRIT.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 13, 14, 15, 16.

* Deut. xxxiii. 16.

Nor fruitless view my Days, and months return;
 Give me with Wonder at thy Works to glow;
 To grasp thy Vision, and thy Truths to know :
 O'er Time's tempestuous Sea to reach thy Shore,
 To sing thy Praise, and all thy Grace adore;
 When Seas shall roll, and Time shall be no more.

}

You see, Aspasio, I have been studying the volume of nature ; endeavouring to read some of its capital characters, and learn some of its instructive lessons. The sea has been the page. But how superficial is my perusal, and how scanty my knowledge. Little, very little have I beheld or conceived, relating to those works of wonder, which the vast unfathomable deep contains *—the plants it produces, and the creatures it nourishes—its stupendous rocks, rising to the skies ; and its inaccessible caverns, sinking to the center—the beds of pearl, which are its native growth ; and the loads of gold, which it has gained by shipwreck ; and those heaps of shells, which pave the floor of the watery realms.—So superficial are my views of CHRIST ; so scanty is my acquaintance with the gospel.

You. I presume, are sitting at the feet of that sublime TEACHER ; and attending to the dictates of HIS mouth ; in “ whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge † ”. Let me promise myself a communication of your thoughts, as I have freely transmitted a specimen of mine ; rendering me, by this intercourse, your more obliged, though it is scarce possible for me to be, more than I already am,

Your affectionate

THERON.

S s

* Should the reader desire to see this subject, more largely opened, and more fully improved, I would refer him to “ Contemplations on the Ocean”, lately published by my ingenious and pious friend Mr. PEARSELL.

P. S. Monsieur Pascal, who was remarkably fond of brevity, makes an odd excuse for transgressing, on a particular occasion, his favourite rule. He intreats his friend to pardon the unusual length of his epistle, by assuring him, that he had not time to make it shorter.—I cannot, it must be confessed, adopt this philosopher's apology. For, I have purposely lengthened my letter, with a view of setting in this one circumstance, a pattern for my *Aspasio*.



END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

